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DRAFTING A GAME PLAN

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JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

Mike Riley is entering his third season at Nebraska, though his program has a fresh look heading into the first game against Arkansas State.

ROLLING OUT A NEW LOOK

There is some suspense to the 2017 Nebraska football season, wouldn't you say?

First, the Huskers will be trotting out a new quarterback. Some new wideouts will be hauling in catches (You'll see plenty of No. 1 and No. 10).

Then, of course, there is Bob Diaco's defense. It will look and feel different.

In many ways, Nebraska is drawing up new plans, and coach Mike Riley is the architect. The third-year coach brought in an impact recruiter in Donte Williams, and then Diaco to restore Nebraska's intensity on defense.

"I don't know how that narrative sounds in general," Riley said at Big Ten Media Days. "But that's where we are, but I do have a lot of faith and am very interested in what this is going to look like going forward."

Fans are very interested, too.

So that brings us to the theme attached to the Journal Star's 60-page special section. Designing a new game plan.

There has been plenty of talk. Plenty of hype. Plenty of buildup. Plenty of discussion about the vision of success. How will it look?

We're about to find out.

SECTION CREDITS

Sports Editor: Clark Grell

Assistant Sports Editor: Clint Robus

Photo Editor: Ted Kirk

Cover design: Clark Grell

Writers: Chris Basnett, Steven M. Sipple, Brent C. Wagner, Shea Carlson, Timothy Gray, Ben Jones

Copy editors: Alex Lantz, Rob Schlotterbeck, Timothy Weber

Design: Diane Cunningham, Lee Design Center

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MEMORIAL STADIUM INFO

NEBRASKA'S CLEAR BAG POLICY KICKS IN

Beginning this season, Nebraska will implement a new clear bag policy for all Huskers events, including football games.

Each fan will be allowed to enter the stadium with one clear plastic bag.

What qualifies?

- Bags that are clear plastic, vinyl or PVC and do not exceed 12-by-6-by-12 inches.
- One-gallon clear plastic freezer bag (Ziploc bag or similar).
- Small clutch bags, approximately the size of a hand, with or without a handle or strap can be taken into the venue with one of the clear plastic bags. The bag cannot be larger than 4½-by-6½ inches.
- Exceptions will be made for approved medical needs items after proper inspection.

What doesn't qualify?

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: Purses larger than a clutch bag, coolers, briefcases, backpacks, fanny packs, solid drawstring bags, luggage of any kind, computer bags, camera bags, binocular cases, diaper bags, any bag larger than the permissible size, and nonapproved seat cushions and chairbacks.

Of note

Blankets are allowed. Fans are asked to carry them over a shoulder or arm upon arrival at the stadium gates. Binoculars and/or cameras around the necks or in hand are allowed.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Alcoholic beverages, concealed weapons, controlled substances, backpacks, large bags, coolers, chairbacks, noise makers, glass bottles, cans, video cameras, banners/flags on poles and open umbrellas.

PARKING, SHUTTLES

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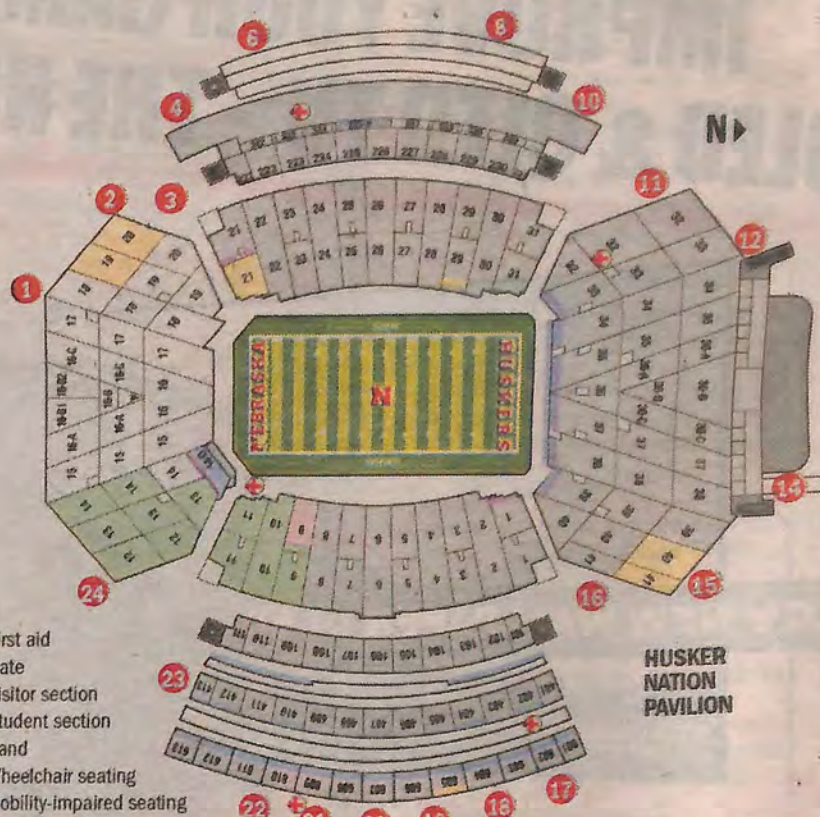
Fans are encouraged to use the StarTran shuttle service. Shuttle service to and from East Stadium operates two hours before kickoff until 45 minutes before kickoff. Shuttles will return to the lots immediately after the game. Shuttle rides cost \$5 each way or \$10 roundtrip. Season passes are \$50. For more information on the Big Red Express, search the keyword "StarTran" at lincoln.ne.gov.

The pickup and drop-off points are:

- The city Municipal Service Center, Northwest 12th and West Bond streets (Interstate 80 exit 399, east of McDonald's).
- Southeast Community College, 88th and O streets.
- Holmes Lake, 70th Street and Normal Boulevard.
- Gateway Mall, 61st and O streets.
- SouthPointe Pavilions, 27th Street and Pine Lake Road.
- Lincoln North Star High School, 5801 N. 33rd St. (I-80 exit 403, east on Folkways Boulevard).

GAMEDAY SCHEDULE

- 7 a.m.: Stadium Drive closed to vehicle traffic.
- Four hours before kickoff: Ticket office opens (three hours before any 11 a.m. games).
- Three hours before kickoff: Husker Nation Pavilion and West Stadium lobby open; Gates 19 and 21 open for club and suite tickets only.
- 2½ hours before kickoff: Football team arrives for Unity Walk.
- 90 minutes before kickoff: Stadium gates open.
- 45 minutes before kickoff: Band marches to stadium.



BEFORE THE GAME

The Husker Nation Pavilion, on the football practice fields north of Ed Weir Track, opens three hours before kickoff of home games. Admission is free.

The Traditions Lobby and The Nebraska Experience Room will be open to the public four hours before kickoff. Videos and guided tours are not available on gameday.

ENTERING THE STADIUM

Fans are encouraged to enter the stadium at the gate printed on their tickets; fans can enter Gates 1-23 to access the East, North and West stadiums.

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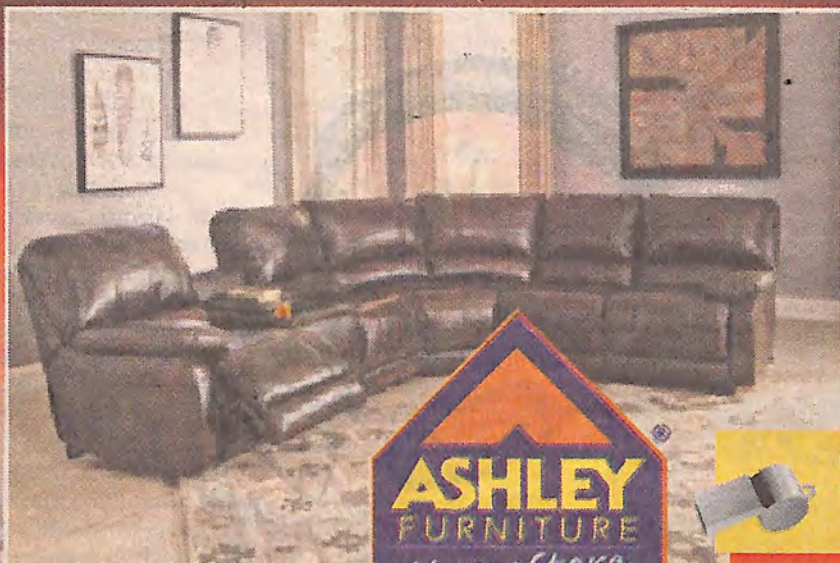
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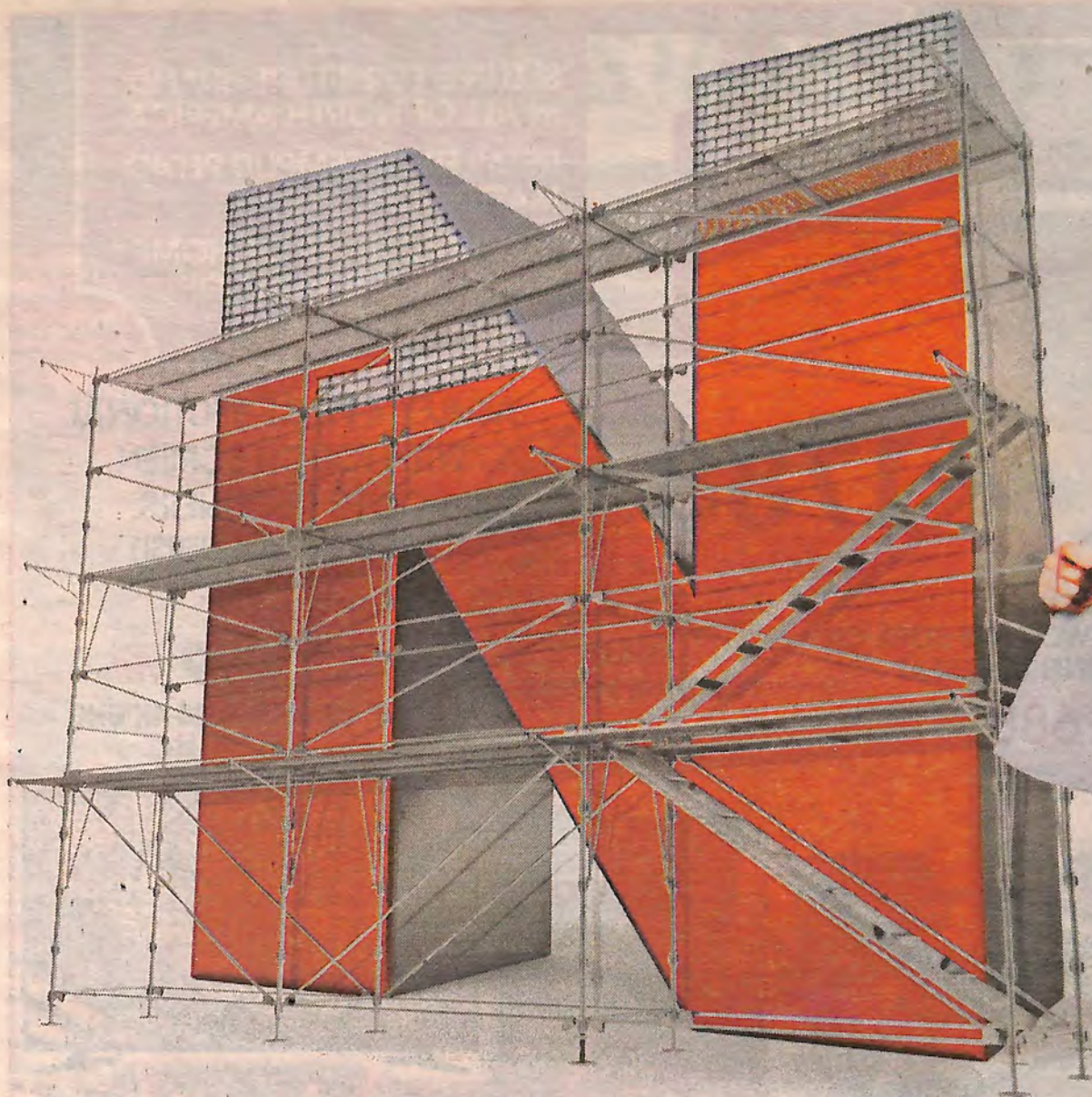
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**'It does feel,
in a sense, like
starting over,'
Riley says of 2017**



**ILLUSTRATION BY CLARK
GRELL, JOURNAL STAR**

REVISING THE BLUEPRINT



**STEVEN M.
SIPPLE**

Mike Riley arrived at Nebraska in late 2014 with a blueprint for how he wanted to improve the Husker football program.

Since that time, he has crumpled up much of the plan and tossed it into the proverbial waste bin.

"It does feel, in a sense, like starting over," Riley said recently.

Consider: Only one original member of Nebraska's 2015 defensive staff remains.

Meanwhile, Bob Diaco, since his arrival in January, has taken Lincoln by storm, a 44-year-old bundle of energy with a cocksure nature that seems to appeal

to his players. They seem to have wholeheartedly bought in to the new defensive coordinator's 3-4 scheme — a significant change from Mark Banker's 4-3 system.

However, some Nebraska fans cringe when they hear Riley say "starting over," mindful of the Huskers' unsightly 17-year stretch without a conference championship.

How much longer will it last?

Thing is, many Husker fans seem confident in Riley's blueprint revisions. The patience of those fans is admirable, considering Riley's 15-11 record at NU.

Trying to predict where Riley's revised overall plan will take the Huskers this season can be a challenging exercise. With so many unknowns, the safe answer is seven to 10 wins in the regular season.

"The other part of it is the quarterbacking change," Riley said. "So, new defense, new quarterback. It feels like, in a way, starting over. But the beauty of it is we're not. We've been with many of these kids for two years. That's the fun part of being a coach, is building that trust, those relationships, the culture, the values that you want in a program.

"It's personal when you get an opportunity to do that. You have a vision. You have more time to do it. It's important to be able to establish those things."

It appears Riley's vision for the offense finally can come to fruition now that he has the type of quarterback that best fits his system. In that regard, it's hard to overstate the importance of Tanner Lee, the 6-4, 225-pound transfer from Tulane who has captured the imagination of fans with his strong arm, efficient release and calm demeanor.

It also helps matters that Lee enthusiastically believes in the Riley/Danny Langsdorf offensive blueprint.

"The style of offense, I think it clearly suits to what I do best — you know, throwing the ball around," Lee said.

He describes a rather complex blueprint.

"I would say it's a picture that includes a pro-style offense and spread and some West Coast in there," he said. "It's a melting pot of an offense. Coach Langsdorf and Coach Riley have worked with so many different people — such an enormous coaching tree. It's kind of just pull from here, pull from there."

The conversation inevitably shifts to a Nebraska offensive line that returns five players who started at least four games last season. As Riley said last month during Big Ten Media Days in Chicago, that O-line "is a focal point to our success."

"My expectations are that this group will play well, and frankly they need to," he said. "We need to run the ball, and we need to protect the quarterback. And we also need to protect the offensive line. We need to be very smart in the approach. To go in and say we're going to drop-back pass 40 times a game and put that burden on the offensive line to block every pass stunt and pass rush and blitz that's known to man, which is what happens when you don't have a mobile quarterback, you're going to see the kitchen sink."

"And so to think that you're just going to go drop-back pass and everything's going to be good, because you have a good quarterback and some good receivers, that this is going to be a good thing,



GWYNETH ROBERTS, JOURNAL STAR

Defensive coordinator Bob Diaco directs the defense to drills during a recent practice at Memorial Stadium. Diaco brings a new scheme to Lincoln.

you're wrong. It's going to be hard."

When Riley says "protecting the line," he means having a good screen game, a good draw game and good quick-passing game.

Plus, know this: Riley's blueprint since, well, forever has been to try to be a balanced offense — 50 percent run, 50 percent pass is the objective. But Nebraska ran the ball 56.7 percent of the time year.

Said Langsdorf, the play-caller: "If we can have a good balance with a good run game, with play-actions off of it, that's when we do our best. If we get too one-dimensional either way, it's not very good."

Speaking of not very good, Banker's 4-3 system faltered badly in the final two games last season. Riley said it was in the days immediately after reviewing video of the Dec. 30 Music City Bowl, in which his team dropped a 38-24 decision to Tennessee, that he made the decision to fire Banker, his longtime defensive coordinator.

Enter Diaco, who in 2012

at Notre Dame won the Broyles Award as the nation's top assistant coach after helping lead the Irish to the national championship game.

But how well will Nebraska's key linemen and linebackers — players such as Mick Stoltenberg, Carlos Davis, Dedrick Young and Marcus Newby — fit in Diaco's scheme?

And how well will the young corners react when they're picked on incessantly, because they will be

Offseason staff changes

November 2016: Bruce Read is dismissed as Nebraska special teams coach.

December 2016: Nebraska hires Donte Williams, a highly regarded recruiter, as cornerbacks coach.

January: Nebraska parts ways with defensive coordinator Mark Banker, who worked with Mike Riley for nearly 20 years. Safeties coach Brian Stewart leaves to become defensive coordinator at Rice.

January: Nebraska hires Bob Diaco as defensive coordinator; he brings with him the 3-4 defense.

February: Nebraska hires Bob Elliott as safeties coach.

March: Nebraska hires Scott Booker as a special-teams analyst.

June: Elliott steps away from full-time position for health reasons; Booker takes over as a full-time assistant. Elliott later dies after a battle with cancer.

picked on incessantly?

Even Riley sounds intrigued to see how well certain defenders fit in the new system.

"You look at a 4-3 team, and then you take those guys and you put them into a 3-4 ... It's actually kind of fun to see how the pieces work," he said. "I think there have been some good fits."

Diaco's passion for the sport seems a good fit for Nebraska. He told BTN he's aligned himself "with one of the greatest traditions in college football history —

winning traditions — and in particular the defensive tradition of the Blackshirts. To be a part of that, and have an opportunity to lead that, is almost too much to pass up.

"And then you couple that with Coach Riley, and the man Coach Riley is, and my opportunity to learn from him and take the next step in my development, was just a no-brainer."

Reach the writer at 402-473-7440 or ssipple@journalstar.com. On Twitter @HuskerExtraSip.



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SHAPING UP A SEASON

It's always difficult to forecast how a college football season will play out, especially for a Husker team with a new look. But our staff – Chris Basnett (CB), Clark Grell (CG), Clint Robus (CR) and Steven M. Sipple (SS) – give it their best shots.

SEPT. 2

ARKANSAS STATE

CB: Nebraska 42-14
CG: Nebraska 34-17
CR: Nebraska 38-21
SS: Nebraska 44-23

SEPT. 9

AT OREGON

CB: Oregon 38-31
CG: Nebraska 28-26
CR: Oregon 31-27
SS: Oregon 37-31

SEPT. 16

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

CB: Nebraska 50-20
CG: Nebraska 56-14
CR: Nebraska 42-20
SS: Nebraska 34-24

SEPT. 23

RUTGERS

CB: Nebraska 45-17
CG: Nebraska 40-21
CR: Nebraska 28-14
SS: Nebraska 38-24

SEPT. 29

AT ILLINOIS

CB: Nebraska 37-13
CG: Nebraska 24-7
CR: Nebraska 24-13
SS: Nebraska 34-20

OCT. 7

WISCONSIN

CB: Nebraska 24-21
CG: Wisconsin 20-16
CR: Wisconsin 21-13
SS: Nebraska 27-24

OCT. 14

OHIO STATE

CB: Ohio State 42-21
CG: Ohio State 34-24
CR: Ohio State 31-24
SS: Ohio State 35-27

OCT. 28

AT PURDUE

CB: Nebraska 48-28
CG: Nebraska 36-27
CR: Nebraska 24-20
SS: Nebraska 38-34

NOV. 4

NORTHWESTERN

CB: Nebraska 30-23
CG: Northwestern 30-27
CR: Nebraska 28-27
SS: Northwestern 31-28

NOV. 11

AT MINNESOTA

CB: Nebraska 26-12
CG: Nebraska 28-21
CR: Nebraska 27-24
SS: Nebraska 24-21

NOV. 18

AT PENN STATE

CB: Penn State 40-30
CG: Penn State 42-28
CR: Penn State 31-17
SS: Penn State 45-24

NOV. 24

IOWA

CB: Nebraska 28-23
CG: Nebraska 21-13
CR: Nebraska 24-21
SS: Nebraska 27-24

BIG TEN CHAMPIONSHIP

CB: Ohio State 40, Nebraska 23
CG: Ohio State 35, Wisconsin 21
CR: Ohio State 28, Wisconsin 23
SS: Ohio State 28, Wisconsin 21

NEBRASKA'S BOWL DESTINATION

CB: Outback (LSU 27, Nebraska 24)
CG: Pinstripe (Nebraska 28, Virginia Tech 24)
CR: Holiday (Nebraska 38, UCLA 35)
SS: Holiday (Stanford 31, Nebraska 21)

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

CB: Ohio State 45, USC 35; Alabama 31, Florida State 10
CG: Alabama 31, Auburn 24; USC 28, Ohio State 23
CR: USC 45, Ohio State 38; Alabama 27, Florida State 24
SS: Ohio State 31, Okla. State 27; Alabama 37, USC 24

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

CB: Ohio State 30, Alabama 24

CG: USC 34, Alabama 31

CR: Alabama 28, USC 21

SS: Alabama 41, Ohio State 17



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THE BUILDUP

The first draft is written;
now it's up to Lee to
start construction

SCOTT BRUHN, NEBRASKA COMMUNICATIONS

Tanner Lee was named scout team MVP by the Huskers last year. Now he's ready to take the reins.

CHRIS BASNETT
Lincoln Journal Star

Let's be completely honest with each other here.

There isn't much of the Tanner Lee story that hasn't been told.

We're all waiting for the next chapter to be written; for Lee to be the architect of whatever this season may hold for a Nebraska football team still in search of that elusive next step back toward the

upper echelon of college football. But the guy is going to start at quarterback for the Huskers. And just like the guy building your house, all eyes will be on No. 13 in red to make sure the walls are straight and the roof doesn't fall off.

But when was the last time the hype was like this?

There have been the curiosities — Taylor Martinez, then Tommy Armstrong.

There was excitement with those two, sure. But when was the last time Nebraska had a player at the quarterback position who seemed like a sure thing?

Martinez gave us blinding flashes of brilliance. Armstrong inspired with his toughness. But who was the last Nebraska quarterback to play at a high level over an entire season? Was it Joe Ganz in 2008? Was it Eric Crouch in 2001?

Has it really been that long? Will Lee break the drought?

Listen to those who have seen him up close — and there's been plenty of talk from those who have seen him up close — and you start to believe that Lee might be able to do this, might be able to make the jump from struggling through two years at Tulane to making the Nebraska football machine hum.

We've heard it since the beginning, when Bill Devaney, NU's

executive director of player personnel, shared the now infamous story over the winter. It's become as well-known and retold among Husker fans as most anything that's happened on the field in recent years.

Talking to Archie Manning after the Manning passing Academy in Louisiana, Devaney got a glowing report. Lee was the best player at the camp. Better than Jared Goff, who would go on to be a No. 1

NFL Draft pick. Better than anyone at a camp run by the first family of quarterbacking.

"There is a boy down at Tulane named Tanner Lee," Manning told Devaney "You have to keep your eye on this boy from Tulane."

And the hype train was headed down the tracks.

Brandon Reilly is getting paid to catch passes now, working as a rookie with the Buffalo Bills. He was a key figure in some of Nebraska's biggest plays the last couple seasons. He also saw Lee's work when no one else outside the team could.

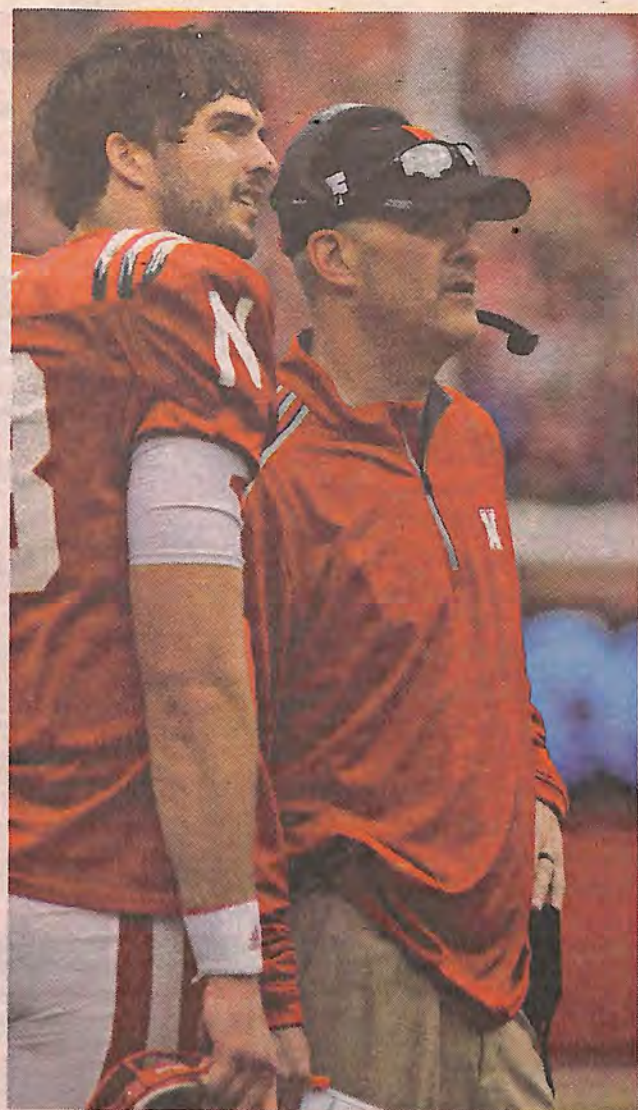
"He's just a stud. There's no way around it," Reilly said last winter. "I've seen him work on the scout team. ... His timing and throws are perfect almost all the time."

Lee doesn't need to be perfect at Nebraska, though perfection has been hard to find from an NU quarterback over the last decade or so.

Lee, on paper, was far from perfect in his two seasons at Tulane. The statistical struggles are well-documented — 3,601 yards, 23 touchdowns, 21 interceptions and a 53 percent completion rate — over 19 games as a starter.

It's also known that those numbers didn't all fall on Lee. Tulane went 3-9 when Lee was a freshman and repeated the record when he was a sophomore. The talent level was low. The Green Wave were behind a lot. Lee was often playing catch-up. And it could have been worse, according to Eric Price, Lee's offensive coordinator at Tulane.

"We asked the quarterback to do everything, make all the calls. He had to be Drew Brees for us in order for us to be successful. He was just right out of high school, we threw him in there," Price told the Journal Star in February. "We weren't a very good team



GWYNETH ROBERTS, JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

Quarterback Tanner Lee (left) watches a replay of the action alongside offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf during the Red-White Spring Game at Memorial Stadium on April 15.

and we were playing against better talent all the time. A lot of his stats and the things that look bad on paper really weren't his fault. He probably did the best he could under the circumstances."

Price then added perhaps the most telling line:

"I think if we had someone else, he would have done a lot worse."

Lee passed his first test in Lincoln, dazzling 78,000 or so in April's spring game. The touchdown pass he laid in to JD Spielman remains his signature moment. You just smiled thinking about

it, didn't you?

Things get real soon enough. Arkansas State is

no pushover in the season opener. The Red Wolves have a defensive end who will play on Sundays. If Nebraska sputters, if Arkansas State takes a lead, all the praise and all the fun and all the anticipation can turn into pressure quicker than Lee zips an out route.

"If you're asking if he can handle the stage, absolutely he'll be able to handle the stage ... because he'll be prepared to handle the stage," said Wayne Keiser, Lee's high school coach. "And that's what he does the best: He gets himself prepared. The preparation is flawless."

The polish Lee shows on the field also shows up in front of the media. For a guy who has yet to take an official snap in a Nebraska uniform, Lee has spent more than his fair share of time staring down the cameras and microphones of one college football's largest reporter throngs.

And he's at ease. He handles it like a pro. Lee doesn't have the brashness of a Johnny Manziel or the bravado of a Cam Newton. His answers are, to be honest, pretty vanilla. He's certainly very polite and engaging, but if you're looking for something juicy, you'll have to look somewhere else.

It's a quality his coaches probably don't mind one bit.

"It just kind of comes

with it," Lee said after a recent practice. "I just kind of take it in stride. Like I've said, I've just been enjoying it. It's a great opportunity. I'm looking forward to working hard and just making the most of it."

The hard work has come mostly away from the spotlight. Lee toiled on the scout team for a year, with the only eyes on him belonging to his teammates, coaches and other closely involved with the program.

He earned scout team MVP honors in 2016 after working against NU's top units and scrimmaging during Sunday practices.

But when the calendar turned to 2017, Lee stepped into the pressure cooker. In four months' time, he locked up the starting job. His grip on that spot has only strengthened in fall camp.

It helped, Lee said, having teammates that were ready to go to work in the summer after the hype of spring had died down, if just a little.

"I didn't have to get them up there or anything. They were getting me up there. So it's nice to have guys that want to work," Lee said. "It's been a lot of fun. Last year I was still learning and wasn't getting a lot of reps, obviously, having to sit out. So this has just been great. It's an unbelievable opportunity, so I've just been enjoying it every day."

There's that level-head-

edness again.

Lee will have his bad moments this season. When you're building a house, something always pops up.

But Lee, for all intents and purposes, seems to have the tools for the job.

"Tanner's definitely the best passer in the Big Ten, at least that I've seen," Nebraska receivers coach Keith Williams said earlier this spring. "The thing is, he's got to go out and show it on Saturdays and handle the pressure and the crowds and all that goes into it. But if you brought all the quarterbacks in the Big Ten onto a field and just said, 'throw the ball,' he'd be the best passer."

That's sure fun to listen to. But Lee's arm, strong as it may be, won't carry this team through the cold winter. Plenty of the same experts who love Lee's ability also think Nebraska will take a step back this season, no matter how good the Cornhuskers' quarterback might be.

That's where Lee's role as a leader will be just as important as his ability to zip a throw.

"Are we going to let that happen?" Lee recently asked rhetorically. "Or are we going to do something about it?"

Reach the writer at 402-473-7436 or cbasnett@journalstar.com. On Twitter @HuskerExtraCB.



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RELEASE

Being strong is nice. Being quick is just as good. With a flick of the wrist, Lee is able to get the ball out on time and on target. Huge when pass protection breaks down.

— COMPILED BY
CHRIS BASNETT

ARM

Like speed for a wide receiver or leg strength for a running back, a strong arm is a prerequisite for a pro-style QB. And Lee has a cannon. Slants, deep outs, posts, play-action: They all require zip on the ball. Lee has it, and it comes naturally. "You'd like to say that he was this terrible thrower (when he got here) and now he's great," Langsdorf joked. "But he definitely has come in with some talent."

DESIGNING A PRO-STYLE QUARTERBACK

Every offensive system needs its quarterback, and every quarterback needs a system. So just what are Nebraska offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf and head coach Mike Riley looking for in their signal callers? We've gotten a better picture of that over the years. And Tanner Lee, both coaches have said, checks the same boxes as the best they've coached.

HEAD

Lee had a full year to learn Nebraska's playbook, and already had a head start by coming from a similar offensive system at Tulane. His knowledge of what Langsdorf wants dictates much of what Nebraska will run. Expect a more "traditional" looking pro-style attack based solely on how well Lee understands those concepts.

EYES

You gotta find the open man, whether he's streaking downfield, or releasing into the flat. And you have to do it quickly while seeing what the defense is throwing at you. "He's really smart and able to see coverages and get us in the right plays," Langsdorf said. "He's been great in the run game and in the check-with-mes, and directing traffic as well."

FOOTWORK

Nebraska quarterbacks have long been known for being able to get the job done with their legs. Lee won't run for 800 yards this year, but his feet will still be critical. Taking the proper drop, squaring his body, getting out on bootlegs: all key pieces in a pro-style attack. "It's really important for the timing. That's a huge part of it," Langsdorf said. "And if his feet are bad, it's not going to time up with the receivers. So the footwork part of it is huge, and we do things maybe a little bit differently than he had in the past, but he's really worked hard through the summer."

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DESIGNING THE 3-4

WE HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 3-4 DEFENSE, AND AL GROH HAS ANSWERS

STEVEN M. SIPPLE
Lincoln Journal Star

Al Groh is considered to be a leading expert on the 3-4 defense.

Just ask Bob Diaco.

The first-year Nebraska defensive coordinator worked under Groh as a linebackers coach at Virginia from 2006 through 2008. During his introductory news conference at NU in January, Diaco referenced Groh, describing him as a "great teacher."

Groh was Virginia's head coach from 2001-09. Before that period, he worked for four NFL teams from 1989 to 2000 — the Giants, Browns, Patriots and Jets — and coached some of the league's best defensive players, including Lawrence Taylor, Andre Tippett, Carl Banks and Willie McGinest.

Groh speaks highly of Diaco.

"Lots of energy," Groh said. "Lots of passion for football. Very organized."

Groh isn't familiar with how Diaco's 3-4 defense has evolved in recent years. But Groh can take you through the key elements of a 3-4, especially the Bill Belichick/Bill Parcells model that he learned — which is essentially the system currently used by Alabama.

"Which is basically a two-gap system with downhill inside linebackers and big, versatile outside linebackers," Groh said.

Retired from coaching and living right outside Boston, the 73-year-old Groh was gracious enough to answer some of our basic questions.

Question: You like to say outside linebackers in a 3-4 are like the 3-4-5 hitters in a baseball lineup. What do you mean by that?

Groh: In baseball, those are the major run producers. In the 3-4, the outside linebackers are the guys who are supposed to get the RBIs — in other words, make the big plays in the offensive backfield, in the run game and in coverage. It requires a lot of attributes to fulfill all the aspects of the job description. It takes size. It takes athletic ability. It takes instincts. It takes a very versatile game to be a true outside linebacker. The guy can't be a one-trick pony. Certainly an integral part of the position is to be a dynamic pass rusher. But if all he is is a dynamic pass rusher, then what he really is is a defensive end.

A true outside linebacker has to be able to dominate the tight end area against the run, rush the passer and continuously disrupt the pocket, but also be an effective pass defender. If that outstanding pass rusher can't also be an outstanding pass defender, then the 3-4 defense loses its versatility of being

able to rush any one of four linebackers to create your basic four-man rush.

Q: Why is the 3-4 typically considered a good pass-rush system?

Groh: With any defense — 3-4, 4-3, nickel, whatever it might be — your basic core pass rush is a four-man rush. So, in a 3-4, which one of those four linebackers is going to join the down three (linemen) to create the fourth rusher? There's a deceptive aspect in that, which has a lot to do with the success of, for instance ... You might be familiar with the Pittsburgh Steelers' fire-zone concept under (former defensive coordinator) Dick LeBeau. So much of that was based on putting together a variety of rush schemes in which the offense had to figure out, after the snap of the ball, which one of the four linebackers were going to come in on the pass rush. Or sometimes two of those four linebackers will join the three linemen to create a five-man rush. When you take away that versatility (of an outside linebacker) — because the guy is a one-trick pony — then you're not really a true 3-4. You line up like a 3-4 team, but you don't really play like a 3-4 team.

Q: Would you characterize the outside linebackers as the most important pieces of a 3-4 defense?

Groh: I wouldn't say "most important" because it takes all the parts working together to really create the effective 3-4. For example, it's not a glamour position like we talk about with the outside linebackers being your cleanup hitters, but it's hard to be a really good 3-4 defense without a really good nose tackle. That guy must have good lateral quickness as well as leverage, power and explosion.

Q: Why is lateral quickness important for a nose tackle?

Groh: Because that center rarely, if ever, during the course of a game or season is going to come off the ball straight ahead. He's always coming off at essentially a 45-degree angle to the side of the play. If the nose tackle has what most people associate as prototypical nose-tackle size, but he can't move laterally, then he's immediately cut off.

Q: What is prototypical nose-tackle size?

Groh: Six-foot-2 to 6-foot-4, 295 pounds or thereabouts. The player has to be able to play with leverage.

Q: Are the jobs of the defensive backs in a 3-4 system much different than in a 4-3?

Groh: No. Coverage is coverage, regardless of what front scheme you choose ... There is no typical 3-4 coverage. It all depends on the philosophy and style of what that coach wants to play in the secondary.

Q: One last thing: Is there anything in particular that distinguishes Alabama's 3-4?

Groh: (Chuckling) Yeah, the players.

Reach the writer at 402-473-7440 or ssipple@journalstar.com. On Twitter @HuskerExtraSip.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO



DRAWING UP TUNNEL WALK

JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

BRENT C. WAGNER, Lincoln Journal Star

Looking back now, you could say that the first Tunnel Walk for Nebraska football games wasn't much, compared with how it looks now, with historical and current video clips and a microphone in the locker room as the players chant the "Husker Prayer." It really was something, though. It allowed fans to see and feel a part of something that only the fans who lined the path to the field had before: the team leaving the locker room right before the game started and running onto the field. The installation of the large HuskerVision video screens in Memorial Stadium, and the cameras, allowed the 70,000 fans to now experience the team taking the field. And while the production was pretty basic when it all started in 1994, it was the start of something big. Now, just like the product on the field, fans are eager for the first game to see what that year's Tunnel Walk will look like.

THE BEGINNING

Athletic director Bill Byrne got the Tunnel Walk going when he had the screens installed, and hired local sportscaster Jeff Schmahl to start HuskerVision.

Kirk Hartman has been working for HuskerVision from the start, now holding the title of executive director of video production. Hartman and 10 full-time employees, along with student workers, produce video for football games and other sporting events and shows.

No college stadiums were doing anything like Nebraska was when the Tunnel Walk started.

The first year there wasn't a video, just a few flashes on the screens, the music and a live shot of the team walking down a hallway to the field.

"We had what I think was called a video toaster, was the apparatus we used to do a transition, and one of the guys we had up here just happened to hit some button that just kind of flashed those flashes, and that was it. Then we revealed the guys walking out," Hartman said. "That was really it. Pretty basic."

GREAT TIME TO START

The next year the Tunnel Walk began to include animated videos. For a few years, production company Snitily Carr made the videos, but now the HuskerVision staff does. One of the early year animations had the sower on top of the Capital turn into the Heisman Trophy pose.

"One year we did the fly across Nebraska, and that was one of the biggest hits as far as Nebraska people," Hartman said. "We went all the way from Scottsbluff around different things and animated the whole thing. I still hear people asking for that again. But then you have to stay up with the times a little bit. And we do it for recruits, too, as well as fans, so we changed to more of a video format."

The ideas for the Tunnel Walk videos were pretty easy those first few years because it was new, and the team kept winning national titles, and the videos came up with new ways to show off those trophies.

"We had so much success in football, that made that Tunnel Walk even more important, because when good things happen to the football team, good things happen to everybody else, including us," Hartman said.

THEY'RE WITH US

Shot Kleen has also worked with HuskerVision from the start. One of his favorite stories involves co-worker Mike Hodges, who operated the camera for the Tunnel Walk, which required him to be right by the door, and then walk backward to the field.

"We were in the south stadium the first couple of years, and the first time we did it, the door opens and here comes Zach Wiegert and he's a captain and he saw Mike there. Mike was in his way, and Zach pushed him," Kleen said.

Hartman was in the control both, telling Hodges to steady this camera. Hodges yelled back that a linemen had just hit him.

"We went up to Zach the next week and said, 'Hey, Zach, this guy is supposed to be here,'" Kleen said. "He said, 'Oh, OK.'"

9/11 TRIBUTE

The Tunnel Walk for the first game played after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks was one that many people will never forget. The Huskers played Rice on Sept. 20.

This time the players were on the field already. Out of the tunnel instead came a small but important group, with three members of the UNL ROTC, and officers representing the Lincoln Police Department, the State Patrol and Lancaster County Sheriff's department. There was also one firefighter holding a small American flag. When the group reached the field, the firefighter extended his arm, and the flag waved in the breeze.

Radio broadcaster Adrian Fiala told the listeners that he'd been coming to Memorial Stadium a long time, and that was one of the most emotional moments he'd ever seen.

"It was a moment that I'll never forget, that one," Hartman said. "The big games you remember a little more, too, with the Tunnel Walks, but that was the biggest moment I think for the Tunnel Walk."



— COMPILED BY
CHRIS BASNETT, JOURNAL STAR

Tanner Lee
ASSOCIATED PRESS
FILE PHOTO

3 REASONS WHY HUSKERS ARE BUILT TO MAKE SOME NOISE

QUARTERBACK PLAY
Nebraska finally has the pass-first quarterback to run Mike Riley's offense. Tanner Lee has prototypical size, a big arm and the respect of his teammates and coaches. If he lives up to the hype placed on him since he arrived last year as a transfer from Tulane, Lee could go down as the man who took Nebraska to the next level. And should he go down with an injury, there appear to be two good options behind him in Patrick O'Brien and Tristan Gebbia.

THE DEFENSE
Bob Diaco's 3-4 defense vexes opponents. You don't need to be reminded that Nebraska gave up 40 points to Iowa and 38 to Tennessee in its last two games. And the Huskers got an up-close look at just how difficult a 3-4 is to deal with in a close loss at Wisconsin. Head coach Mike Riley's roots are in the 3-4, and Diaco's enthusiasm has seeped down to the players. But we haven't seen it in a game situation yet.

SPECIAL TEAMS
Nebraska's special teams could be among the best not just in the Big Ten, but in the nation. Kicker Drew Brown is a bona fide weapon. Punter Caleb Lightbourn is big, strong and has a year of experience under his belt. The Huskers seem to have plenty of options — starting with a fully healthy De'Mornay Pierson-El — in the return game. In close games — and there are always close games — Nebraska can give itself a decided edge with what might be the program's strongest unit.

3 REASONS WHY THEY MAY NOT

PLAYMAKERS
Scheme and fit and experience are nice, but when it comes down to it, the team with more playmakers wins more often than it loses. Does Nebraska have the dudes to prove the doubters wrong? The 62-3 loss at Ohio State and the 38-24 loss to Tennessee in the Music City Bowl showed a vast gap between NU and its opponents when it came to individual talent. Has that gap closed?

O-LINE QUESTIONS
The offensive line's struggles from 2016 can't carry into 2017. Yes, the 2016 unit was beset with injuries. But Nebraska still struggled to move the ball against some of the most porous defenses in the nation. That group, now full of veterans, needs to be better. Tanner Lee might have a cannon attached to his right shoulder, but he doesn't have the elusiveness of a Tommy Armstrong or Taylor Martinez to cover up mistakes up front. The Pipeline needs to be better. Will it be?

LACK OF DEPTH
How much depth is there behind the top line guys? A few positions — running back, safety — are stocked with talent. Others — cornerback, offensive line, defensive line — have more question marks. Nebraska has already seen its receiver corps thinned by injury before the first game of the season. A few injuries in the wrong places could send things off the rails in a hurry.

3 GAMES THAT COULD MAKE OR CRASH A SEASON



AT OREGON, SEPT. 9

Pretty fun time in Lincoln last year, wasn't it? Now the Ducks would like to return the favor at Autzen Stadium, a place where Mike Riley went 1-6 while head coach at Oregon State. Last season's win helped spur Nebraska to a 7-0 start. Oregon, with new coach Willie Taggart leading the way, would love nothing more than to beat NU and start making up for last season's 4-8 debacle.

WISCONSIN, OCT. 7

Forget the Ohio States of the world for a minute. If Nebraska is to win the Big Ten West Division, the Huskers must beat the Badgers for just the second time since NU joined the league. Last season's overtime loss in a night game at Madison stung, but many around the program came away encouraged by NU's performance. Imagine how folks would feel if the Huskers sent the Badgers home with a loss?

IOWA, NOV. 24

40-10 still smarts, for the fan base, for the coaches, for the players who were on the sideline that cold evening last year in Iowa City. You know what else burns the Husker faithful, even if some of them won't admit it? The Hawkeyes have won three of the past four meetings between the teams with only a 37-34 Nebraska win in 2014 preventing a four-game streak. And that was a contest Iowa led 24-7 late in the third quarter.

3 INCOMING FRESHMEN TO WATCH

TYJON LINDSEY

He's gotten the hype not just from his teammates, but from an offensive coaching staff searching for playmakers. To watch Lindsey move on the field is to see a natural at his position. He may not start right away, but he'll get plenty of chances to make his mark.

JAYLIN BRADLEY

The coaching staff loves Bradley's ability to catch the ball, something that could come in handy for a team trying to improve its screen game. In a crowded backfield, the former Bellevue West star has worked himself into the conversation.

AVERY ROBERTS

The linebacker enrolled early, and was already working with the second unit in spring ball. He was one of the top two or three players in the 2017 recruiting class — a consensus top-100 player nationally — and has backed up that hype so far. Nebraska has a pretty stable group of linebackers ahead of Roberts, but as Mike Riley said after a spring scrimmage, "It's going to be hard not to play him."



JOURNAL STAR
FILE PHOTO

3 PLAYERS ON THE VERGE OF A BREAKOUT SEASON

STANLEY MORGAN

He just might be the best player on this team, regardless of position. And after two seasons of playing behind more experienced guys at his position, it's his time. Mike Riley calls him a "warrior." He'll need to be.



DE'MORNAY PIERSON-EL

Sure he broke out as a freshman. But it's been a lot of pain and frustration since then. Pierson-El is a senior now, fully healthy, and looking at an expanded role on offense to go with his expected return duties.

TANNER LEE

There's been enough written and said about Lee and his potential that it feels like he's been here forever. But he's still a player who threw for 3,601 yards and 23 touchdowns (against 21 interceptions) in two seasons at Tulane. Could he reach those numbers (minus the turnovers) in one season at Nebraska? If he does, the Huskers will be a force.



THE 2-DEEP* FLOOR PLAN

* UNOFFICIAL, AND BASED ON OBSERVATIONS
AND COACHES' COMMENTS THROUGH AUG. 21

34 Drew Brown Sr., 5-11, 200
2016: 38-38 PAT, 12-14 FG
→ 95 Kromer Rath- Sr.

41 Luke McNitt Sr., 6-2, 250
2016: 13 games, 2 car., 4 yds.

8 Stanley Morgan Jr., 6-1, 195
2016: 13 games, 33 rec., 453 yds., 2 TD
→ 83 Bryan Reimers- Jr.

10 JD Spielman Rfr., 5-9, 180
2016: Redshirted
→ 9 Keyan Williams- Jr.

18 Tre Bryant So., 5-11, 200
2016: 12 games, 43 car., 172 yds., 1 TD

22 Devine Ozigbo Jr., 6-0, 230
2016: 11 games, 97 car., 412 yds., 5 TD

21 Mikale Wilbon Jr., 5-9, 200
2016: 10 games, 15 car., 89 yds., 0 TD

13 Tanner Lee Jr., 6-4, 220
2016: Sat out year (transfer)
→ 12 Patrick O'Brien Rfr.
14 Tristan Gebbia Fr.

15 De'Mornay Pierson-El Sr., 5-9, 190
2016: 13 games, 20 rec., 254 yds., 1 TD
→ 1 Tyjon Lindsey- Fr.

77 David Knevel Sr., 6-9, 315
2016: 10 games, 10 starts
→ 71 Matt Farnick Rfr.

63 Tanner Farmer Jr., 6-4, 305
2016: 11 games, 11 starts
→ 56 Boe Wilson Rfr.

62 Cole Conrad Jr., 6-5, 300
2016: 13 games, 5 starts
→ 79 Michael Decker So.

67 Jerald Foster Jr., 6-3, 210
2016: 4 games, 4 starts
→ 50 John Karidon Rfr.

68 Nick Gates Jr., 6-5, 295
2016: 13 games, 13 starts
→ Brenden James Fr.
Christian Gaylord So.

88 Tyler Hoppes Sr., 6-4, 245
2016: 10 games (special teams)
→ 89 Connor Ketter Sr.

HUSKER OFFENSE HUSKER DEFENSE

91 Freedom Akinmoladun Jr., 6-4, 280
2016: 13 games, 32 tkl., 5 TFL, 4 sk., 10 QBH
→ 94 Khalil Davis- So.

44 Mick Stoltenberg Jr., 6-5, 305
2016: 12 games, 25 tkl., 3 TFL, 1.5 sk.
→ 99 Payton Newell- Jr.
97 Deontre Thomas- Fr.

96 Carlos Davis So., 6-2, 295
2016: 13 games, 24 tkl., 5 TFL, 2 sk.
→ 9 DaiShon Neal- So.

6 Eric Lee So., 6-0, 195
2016: 8 games, 2 tkl.
→ 23 Dicaprio Bootle Rfr.

3 Marcus Newby Sr., 6-1, 235
2016: 12 games, 18 tkl., 2 sk.
12 Luke Gifford Jr., 6-3, 235
2016: 4 games, 1 tkl.

5 Dedrick Young Jr., 6-1, 235
2016: 12 games, 60 tkl., 4 TFL, 1 sk.
→ 7 Mohamed Berry- So.

49 Chris Weber Sr., 6-3, 240
2016: 13 games, 47 tkl., 1 TFL
→ 15 Avery Roberts- Fr.

22 Alex Davis So., 6-5, 255
2016: 13 games, 2 tkl.
→ 17 Sedrick King Jr.

21 Lamar Jackson So., 6-3, 210
2016: 13 games, 14 tkl., 1 sk.
→ 35 Jeremiah Stovall So.

35 Caleb Lighbourn So., 6-3, 235
2016: 13 games, 65 punts, 39.7 avg.
→ 95 Isaac Armstrong- So.

24 Aaron Williams Jr., 5-11, 190
2016: 13 games, 62 tkl., 3 INT, 7 PB
→ 25 Antonio Reed- Jr.

46 Joshua Kalu Sr., 6-1, 195
2016: 13 games, 66 tkl., 1 INT, 11 PB
→ 26 Kieron Williams- Sr.

MEET THE HUSKERS

QUARTERBACKS

12	Patrick O'Brien	6-4	230	RFr.	San Juan Capistrano, Calif.
13	Tanner Lee	6-4	220	Jr.	Destrehan, La.
14	Tristan Gebbia	6-3	185	Fr.	Calabasas, Calif.
16	Andrew Bunch	6-1	200	So.	Thompson Stations, Tenn.

RUNNING BACKS

5	Jaylin Bradley	6-0	180	Fr.	Bellevue West
18	Tre Bryant	5-11	200	So.	St. Louis
21	Mikale Wilbon	5-9	200	Jr.	Chicago
22	Devine Ozigbo	6-0	230	Jr.	Sachse, Texas
23	Austin Rose	6-1	225	Jr.	Lincoln North Star
24	Sean Lambert	6-0	205	RFr.	Fremont
28	Adam Taylor	6-2	210	Sr.	Katy, Texas
32	Tanner Hass	6-0	200	RFr.	Guardian Angels CC
37	Wyatt Mazour	5-9	190	So.	Boone Central/NG

TIGHT ENDS

11	Austin Allen	6-8	210	Fr.	Aurora
30	Bo Kitrell	6-1	235	Jr.	Ashland-Greenwood
47	Branden Hohenstein	6-4	220	RFr.	Jackson
82	Kurt Rafdal	6-7	230	Fr.	Carmel, Ind.
83	David Engelhaupt	6-3	240	RFr.	Norfolk Catholic
85	Matt Snyder	6-5	240	So.	San Ramon, Calif.
86	Jack Stoll	6-4	245	RFr.	Lone Tree, Colo.
88	Tyler Hoppes	6-4	245	Sr.	Lincoln Southwest
89	Connor Ketter	6-5	245	Sr.	Norfolk Catholic

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

50	John Raridon	6-4	290	RFr.	West Des Moines, Iowa
51	Matt Watts	6-4	285	Sr.	Stockton, Calif.
55	Chris Walker	6-8	275	Fr.	Lincoln East
56	Boe Wilson	6-3	295	RFr.	Lee's Summit, Mo.
59	Jake Kitten	6-2	300	RFr.	Santee, Calif.
61	Bryan Brokop	6-5	295	RFr.	New Lenox, Ill.
62	Cole Conrad	6-5	300	Jr.	Archbishop Bergan
63	Tanner Farmer	6-4	305	Jr.	Highland, Ill.
65	Christian Gaylord	6-6	300	So.	Baldwin City, Kan.
66	Hunter Miller	6-5	275	Fr.	Cross County
67	Jerald Foster	6-3	310	Jr.	Lincoln Southeast
68	Nick Gates	6-5	295	Jr.	Las Vegas
70	Matt Sichterman	6-5	270	Fr.	Cincinnati
71	Matt Farniok	6-6	315	RFr.	Sioux Falls, S.D.
73	Broc Bando	6-5	295	Fr.	Lincoln (IMG Academy)
74	Jalin Barnett	6-4	315	So.	Lawton, Okla.
75	Trent Hixson	6-4	260	Fr.	Omaha Skutt
76	Brenden Jaimes	6-5	250	Fr.	Austin, Texas
77	David Knevel	6-9	315	Sr.	Brantford, Ontario
79	Michael Decker	6-4	305	So.	Omaha North

WIDE RECEIVERS

1	Tyson Lindsey	5-9	160	Fr.	Corona, Calif.
2	Zack Darlington	6-2	195	Jr.	Apopka, Fla.
4	Jaevon McQuitty	6-0	195	Fr.	Columbia, Mo.
8	Stanley Morgan	6-1	195	Jr.	New Orleans
9	Keyan Williams	5-10	195	Jr.	New Orleans
10	JD Spielman	5-9	180	RFr.	Eden Prairie, Minn.
15	De'Mornay Pierson-El	5-9	190	Sr.	Alexandria, Va.
31	Kade Warner	6-1	200	Fr.	Scottsdale, Ariz.
33	Dylan Reynolds	6-0	170	Fr.	Broken Bow
36	Christian Banker	6-1	185	Fr.	Omaha Skutt
40	Brandon Robbins	5-10	190	Fr.	Bellevue East
43	Todd Honas	5-11	195	RFr.	Aurora
45	Ty Chaffin	6-5	200	RFr.	Burwell
80	Brett Classen	6-2	200	Sr.	Medina, Minn.
81	Gabe Rahn	6-1	195	Sr.	Le Mars, Iowa
83	Bryan Reimers	6-5	210	Jr.	Lincoln East
87	Conor Young	6-2	180	So.	Cozad

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

9	DaiShon Neal	6-7	275	So.	Houston
44	Mick Stoltzenberg	6-5	305	Jr.	Gretna
45	A.J. Natter	6-5	260	Sr.	Milton, Wis.
47	Matt Jarzynka	6-4	260	Jr.	Loup City
48	Erik Evans	6-3	265	Sr.	Waverly
50	Ben Stille	6-5	255	RFr.	Ashland-Greenwood
55	Jordan Paup	6-4	230	Fr.	Central City
58	Joel Lopez	6-2	280	Sr.	Saint Charles, Ill.
75	Fyn Anderson	6-3	275	So.	Lincoln Southeast
76	Dylan Owen	6-5	260	Jr.	Westchester, N.Y.
90	Ben Lingenfelter	6-5	265	Fr.	Cherokee, Iowa
91	Freedom Akinmoladun	6-4	280	Jr.	Grandview, Mo.
93	Damion Daniels	6-2	310	Fr.	Dallas
94	Khalil Davis	6-2	290	So.	Blue Springs, Mo.
96	Carlos Davis	6-2	295	So.	Blue Springs, Mo.
97	Deontre Thomas	6-3	280	Fr.	Mustang, Okla.
99	Peyton Newell	6-3	295	Jr.	Hiawatha, Kan.

SPECIALISTS

34	Drew Brown (PK)	5-11	200	Sr.	Southlake, Texas
35	Caleb Lightbourn (P)	6-3	235	So.	Washougal, Wash.
39	Cole Frahm (PK)	6-5	200	Fr.	Omaha Burke
54	Jordan Ober (LS)	6-1	225	Jr.	Las Vegas
90	Jackson Walker (P)	6-4	250	Jr.	Overland Park, Kan.
92	Chase Urbach (LS)	6-3	200	So.	Grosse Pointe, Mich.
95	Kramer Rath (PK)	6-1	175	Sr.	Lincoln Southwest
98	Isaac Armstrong (P)	5-11	200	So.	Lincoln Southwest

LINEBACKERS

3	Marcus Newby	6-1	235	Sr.	Gaithersburg, Md.
5	Dedrick Young II	6-1	235	Jr.	Peoria, Ariz.
7	Mohamed Barry	6-1	230	So.	Grayson, Ga.
12	Luke Gifford	6-3	235	Jr.	Lincoln Southeast
15	Avery Roberts	6-1	230	Fr.	Wilmington, Del.
17	Sedrick King	6-4	245	Jr.	Plant City, Fla.
18	Guy Thomas	6-3	200	Fr.	Miami
22	Alex Davis	6-5	255	So.	Riviera Beach, Fla.
26	Thomas Connely	5-11	225	Jr.	Kearney Catholic
30	Quayshon Alexander	6-3	245	RFr.	Prospect Park, N.J.
32	Pernell Jefferson	6-2	235	RFr.	New Orleans
33	Willie Hampton	6-1	225	Fr.	Plantation, Fla.
36	Spencer Jordan	6-2	210	RFr.	Omaha Westside
37	Collin Miller	6-3	235	RFr.	Fishers, Ind.
38	Damian Jackson	6-1	245	Fr.	Las Vegas
43	Tyrin Ferguson	6-2	225	So.	New Orleans
40	Grant Jordan	6-2	205	RFr.	Omaha Westside
42	Cody Liske	6-0	200	Fr.	Bennington
49	Chris Weber	6-3	240	Sr.	Elkhorn
52	Andrew Ward	6-1	200	Fr.	Muskegon, Mich.
57	Jacob Weinmaster	6-0	215	So.	Loveland, Colo.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

2	Tony Butler	6-2	210	RFr.	Lakewood, Ohio
4	Avery Anderson	6-0	180	So.	Surprise, Ariz.
6	Eric Lee Jr.	6-0	195	So.	Milton, Mass.
8	Chris Jones	6-0	195	Sr.	Jacksonville, Fla.
11	Boaz Joseph	6-1	200	Sr.	Weston, Fla.
13	JoJo Domann	6-1	205	So.	Colorado Springs, Colo.
19	Marquel Dismuke	6-2	195	RFr.	Calabasas, Calif.
21	Lamar Jackson	6-3	210	So.	Elk Grove, Calif.
23	Dicaprio Bootle	5-10	185	RFr.	Miami
24	Aaron Williams	5-11	190	Jr.	Atlanta
25	Antonio Reed	6-2	210	Jr.	Memphis, Tenn.
26	Kieron Williams	6-1	195	Sr.	Shreveport, La.
28	Eli Sullivan	6-2	200	RFr.	Longmont, Colo.
35	Jeremiah Stovall	5-11	185	So.	Creighton Prep
36	Reid Karel	6-3	205	So.	Seward
41	Jose Marquez	5-10	195	Fr.	Crete
46	Joshua Kalu	6-1	195	Sr.	Houston

ATHLETES

16	Ethan Cox	5-11	175	Fr.	Blair
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FULLBACKS

29	Ben Miles	6-1	210	Fr.	Baton Rouge, La.
38	Harrison Jordan	5-10	240	Sr.	Omaha Westside
41	Luke McNitt	6-2	250	Sr.	Kearney
49	Austin Hemphill	5-10	225	So.	Gretna



BIG RED ARCHITECTS

The plays and schemes have been designed. Now the 2017 Huskers look to make it all come together. These players look to take the plans and turn them into a final product worth glowing about.

CAPSULES BY CLARK GRELL, JOURNAL STAR

13

TANNER LEE

QUARTERBACK, 6-FOOT-4, 220 POUNDS, JUNIOR

After the buildup, Lee ready to take the field

The time for talk and NFL scouting evaluations is about over. And probably no one is more excited about it than Tanner Lee.

After an offseason of raving reviews from inside and outside Husker camp, No. 13 is set to show what he can do against 11 opposing players in front of 85,000-plus fans.

Lee has impressed coaches and teammates with his spot-on throws and his command of the offense during practice. More impressive to his peers is how the Tulane transfer has handled the attention and pressure that comes with the state's most talked about job.

"I think the one thing that I have noted about Tanner Lee (is that) there's not a bunch of drama with him," coach Mike Riley said. "High, low, goofy, crazy, mad, happy. ... Nothing much rattles him and I think he understands the process."

"I think he likes the work, which for me is the key. The guy has talent and likes to work, give us that every day. It's a beautiful thing."

Lee started 19 games at Tulane from 2014-15. He threw for 1,962 yards his redshirt freshman season, and 1,639 yards the following season. He totaled 23 touchdowns and 21 interceptions.

The belief is Lee will excel with better talent around him. He spent last year working with the Husker scout team, fine-tuning his craft and learning Danny Langsdorf's system.

Now it's go-time.

"It's been a lot of fun," Lee said. "Last year I was still learning and wasn't getting a lot of reps, obviously, having to sit out, so this has just been great. It's an unbelievable opportunity, so I've just been enjoying it every day."

PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN, NEBRASKA COMMUNICATIONS



15

DE'MORNAY PIERSON-EL

WIDE RECEIVER, 5-FOOT-9, 190 POUNDS, SENIOR

Stronger, quicker DPE wants to leave lasting mark

De'Mornay Pierson-El used the words multiple times following a fall camp practice.

Enjoy it. Have fun.

That's the receiver's approach to his final season in a Nebraska uniform.

Final season? Somewhat hard to believe, right?

It doesn't seem like it was that long ago when Pierson-El electrified the Nebraska fan base with his playmaking abilities. His 2015 season was shortened by injuries, the biggest blow a major knee injury midway through the season.

Pierson-El slowly worked his way back during 2016, and finished with 20 catches for 254 yards. His best performance came against Tennessee

in the Music City Bowl (five catches for 49 yards).

Nebraska will again turn to Pierson-El in the punt-return game. He was mostly contained last year, but he didn't have much space to work with, averaging 7.3 yards on 23 returns.

Now first-year assistant Scott Booker is helping with special teams.

"He's shown me a few things," Pierson-El said. "He's got a couple of things up his sleeve."

DPE will be looked at to help make his share of plays in Nebraska's passing game, too. Now stronger and more confident, Pierson-El is ready for his final go-round.

"I feel the best I've felt in a while," he said. "My legs are stronger, better. I feel faster, I feel quicker."

8

STANLEY MORGAN

WIDE RECEIVER, 6-FOOT-1, 195 POUNDS, JUNIOR

Huskers see a rising leader, playmaker in Morgan

Gone are Jordan Westerkamp, Brandon Reilly, Cethan Carter and Terrell Newby. Nebraska entered the offseason needing playmakers, and if anyone looks poised for a breakout year, it's Stanley Morgan.

Morgan is more determined than before. His arrest for marijuana possession (the charges were later dropped) was a bump in the summer road. Morgan turned it into a learning moment, and his determination to become a better leader only grew. That was evident during fall camp.

"I want those opportunities now," Morgan said. "Every day I'm fired up, ready to work. You don't really have to lead by just talking every day. You can lead by example."

Morgan was a reliable option last year, as shown in Nebraska's overtime loss at Wisconsin when the New Orleans native made clutch catch after clutch catch.

Morgan finished second on the team with 33 catches last year, and he has career numbers of 58 catches for 757 yards.

"He can be great," Nebraska wide receivers coach Keith Williams said. "It's on him. But he has the potential. He has the physical ability."



18

TRE BRYANTRUNNING BACK, 5-FOOT-11,
200 POUNDS, SOPHOMORE**Bryant continues to impress coaches**

Nebraska's running backs may have been on even ground during fall camp, but there are signs that point to Tre Bryant remaining a key part of Danny Langsdorf's offensive plans, one way or another.

The true sophomore had 13 carries against Maryland and a team-high 11 the following week at Iowa last year. Bryant also had a strong spring season. Fall camp was good, too, but he did miss practice time because of some nicks.

Bryant's versatility fits nicely in Nebraska's offense. He catches the ball well out of the backfield, and Mike Riley has stressed the importance of developing a fluid screen game.

Riley has said he's drawn to backs who can stay on the field no matter the situation. Bryant perhaps fits that criteria better than the rest.

22

DEVINE OZIGBORUNNING BACK, 6-FOOT,
230 POUNDS, JUNIOR**Ozigbo looks to separate himself**

Reggie Davis recalls sitting down with his most experienced running back following last season. Devine Ozigbo talked about determination and focus, and a hunger to become NU's No. 1 tailback.

"He's focused on getting the starting job and he's been very determined this whole camp," said Davis, NU running backs coach.

Ozigbo, who has 135 career carries, can run with power. But he took it upon himself during the offseason to become quicker. He overcame a back injury during spring season, and had some nice runs in the Red-White Spring Game.

The Sachse, Texas, native entered fall camp in a battle for the starting spot at running back, joining junior Mikale Wilbon, sophomore Tre Bryant and freshman Jaylin Bradley.

"All our backs can do the certain same things very well," Ozigbo said earlier in August. "I just have to find that one thing that separates me."

21

MIKALE WILBONRUNNING BACK, 5-FOOT-9,
200 POUNDS, JUNIOR**Wilbon looking for his big breakthrough**

Like Bryant and Ozigbo, Mikale Wilbon is just as determined to become Nebraska's go-to running back.

His goal this fall camp ...

"Pretty much just be great every day," the Chicago native said. "You can't be perfect. You strive to be perfect. I'm just here to go to work every day."

Wilbon's load has been light three years into the program (nine carries two years ago and 15 carries last year), but coaches like his speed and improvements in all aspects.

Wilbon's best attribute: "Big-play ability," he said earlier this month. "I'm trying to make big plays every time I touch the ball. I feel like I can make big plays catching the ball and running the ball."

He showed flashes last year, especially against Northwestern (six carries for 55 yards, including a 32-yarder). The key now for Wilbon is consistency.



67

JERALD FOSTEROFFENSIVE GUARD,
6-FOOT-3, 310 POUNDS,
JUNIOR**Foster aims for a full slate in 2017**

A 2016 fall camp knee injury (MCL tear) was supposed to sideline Jerald Foster for an entire season. But the Lincoln Southeast graduate wasn't up for that.

He told coaches and teammates he would return before the end of the season. Eight games later, Foster was starting alongside Nick Gates on the left side. He played in the final four games.

Now Foster is ready to put in a full season's work.

Foster and the Huskers are hoping cohesion plays a big factor in the offensive line's play in 2017.

"We're mostly all the grade, we came in together, we've known each other for the whole time," Foster said. "That's always a great thing. If you're to (form) relationships, it just allows you to trust, and trust on the football field is pretty much all that it's about."

Foster's MCL tear was one of multiple injuries that rattled Nebraska's offensive line last year. Now, Foster and Gates get a chance to work a full season together.

88

TYLER HOPPES

TIGHT END, 6-FOOT-4, 245 POUNDS, SENIOR

Hoppes fits Riley's plans to a T

Mike Riley gave this glowing report of Nebraska's starting tight end at Big Ten Media Days:

"I think Hoppes might be as good a receiving tight end as we've had in a long time, for me," Riley said.

Remember, Tyler Hoppes has yet to record a catch at the collegiate level. And yet, Riley is extremely confident that he has found a tight end who fits his pro-style offense to a T.

It says a lot about the potential of Hoppes, who may play even a bigger role with Nebraska down a wide receiver or two.

"That's high praise," Hoppes said at the beginning of fall camp. "I hope I can live up to that."

It became clear during spring practices that the Huskers were planning to create a key role for Hoppes. He was the target of several passes during scrimmages, and caught four balls for 66 yards in the Red-White Spring Game.

The work continued into the summer.

Known for his route running and pass catching, Hoppes patiently waited his turn. He was behind a trio of seniors on the depth chart last year.

The Lincoln Southwest graduate stuck with it. Now he aims to make his head coach proud.

68

NICK GATESOFFENSIVE TACKLE,
6-FOOT-5, 295 POUNDS,
JUNIOR**Gates wants to close any gates to Lee**

It's gut-check time for Nebraska's offensive line.

Ask any of the big fellas up front — and offensive line coach Mike Cavanaugh — and that's exactly how they want it.

"We want that pressure, and in tough games we want that ball on our backs," said Nick Gates, Nebraska's most experienced offensive lineman. "Give it to us, and we're going to move the rock this year, so I'm excited."

The pressure is indeed on the backs of Nebraska's offensive line after inconsistent play during the 2016 campaign.

For Gates, he doesn't want a repeat of the Music City Bowl when he struggled to hold off Tennessee star Derek Barnett. Gates aims to not let it happen again.

Gates, at the beginning of fall camp, said his body felt good. He's stronger than he's ever been. And he's past a nasty ankle injury that slowed him during the back end of last season.



44

MICK STOLTENBERG

NOSE TACKLE, 6-FOOT-5, 305 POUNDS, JUNIOR

Stoltenberg standing tall in a new scheme

Nebraska was only a moment removed from a 38-24 loss to Tennessee in the Music City Bowl when Mick Stoltenberg put his arms around Carlos and Khalil Davis.

Stoltenberg was already looking ahead to 2017.

"I just told them we're going to have to take the reins, and there's no time for hesitation," the pride of Gretna told reporters following the game.

Little did Stoltenberg know at the time that he'd be the front set piece of a 3-4 defensive scheme, but here he is.

Nebraska is looking to take advantage of Stoltenberg's size in the 3-4. He plays with a physical and passionate edge, traits that no doubt please defensive coordinator Bob Diaco.

Stoltenberg also is motivated.

"Obviously, there were things that happened in some games last season when we got beat pretty bad," Stoltenberg said. "That's something I think about every day when I come into work ... I think it's important we think about that stuff. It's motivation. It really is."

Stoltenberg played in 12 games last year, making nine starts. He finished with 25 tackles.

He added nearly 20 pounds in the offseason (and 65 since his arrival to Nebraska) to better a fit a key part of Diaco's defense.

"Mick is intangibly tough," Diaco said in the spring. "He's a grinding worker. He's an aggressive player. He's very intense. He's highly competitive, and his competitive spirit doesn't allow for him to get down."



49

CHRIS WEBERLINEBACKER, 6-FOOT-3,
240 POUNDS, SENIOR**Weber's turn
to shine is here**

Chris Weber patiently waited his turn behind Josh Banderas last year. Now, Weber finds himself with the keys to Bob Diaco's defense.

And Weber's position is a biggie. Strong inside backer play is a must.

The Elkhorn graduate appears ready for the challenge. Diaco called Weber a "stalwart" during spring practices.

"I think he's just extremely intelligent and can drive a defense," linebackers coach Trent Bray said. "He knows when to make the calls. He knows when to move people. So when he's on the field, everyone else around him plays faster. I think that's his best attribute."

Weber appeared in 10 games as a sophomore, and made four starts as the Huskers battled through injuries. With Banderas excelling in 2016, Weber saw limited time at middle linebacker and finished with 17 tackles.

Bray saw an unselfish player patiently waiting his turn.

"I think he realized who Josh was and where we were at in that position," Bray said. "It couldn't have been easy for him. It never is. Especially because when he did play he produced at a high level."

Weber added about 10 pounds to his frame during the offseason, weight needed to hold up against offensive guards when playing downhill.

5

DEDRICK YOUNGLINEBACKER, 6-FOOT-1,
235 POUNDS, JUNIOR**Young takes on role on the inside**

Dedrick Young, a true junior, played at outside linebacker during his first two seasons in Lincoln.

Now the Peoria, Arizona, native moves inside next to Chris Weber, a spot expected to fit Young better.

Young played in 12 games last year, making nine starts. He finished with 60 tackles, including 34 solo stops.

Now a veteran, the Huskers are looking to take advantage of Young's experience off the field, too. Linebackers coach Trent Bray said Young and Weber are constantly working with the younger backers.

"They meet with them when we're in meetings, they help them on the field," Bray said. "It's really an asset to where you can put them in a film room with those young guys and they can coach those guys when you're busy."

It was two years ago when Young played against BYU and became one of just four true freshman linebackers to start any game since 1993.

Bray has seen a lot of growth in Young.

"He understands where he needs to be in coverage better," Bray said. "I think the switch to the inside linebacker, in the box, has helped him tremendously with his physical attributes."





24

AARON WILLIAMS

SAFETY, 5-FOOT-11, 190 POUNDS, JUNIOR

NU's fearless leader in the secondary

Ask any coach who has worked with Aaron Williams, and you'll find a common theme when it comes to Nebraska's junior safety.

Mark Banker, Bob Diaco, the late Bob Elliott and Mike Riley have commended Williams about his high football IQ.

"I have appreciated Aaron Williams from the beginning," Riley said at Big Ten Media Days. "He is really a smart, intelligent, aware football player. He is fearless. He is a really good person. He's a great teammate."

Now he's teaming up with Joshua Kalu to form one of the top safety combinations in the Big Ten, and pos-

sibly the country.

Williams is as versatile as they come.

The Atlanta native started as a true freshman in Nebraska's 2015 season opener against BYU. Williams has started 13 games since then. Playing as NU's primary nickel back, Williams finished with 62 tackles, including 32 solo stops, last year. He also had three picks and two sacks.

A season later, Williams carries higher expectations.

"The sky's the limit and we're only stopping each other," Williams said.

46

JOSHUA KALU

SAFETY, 6-FOOT-1, 195 POUNDS, SENIOR

Kalu is Nebraska's safety valve

When Chris Jones went down with a knee injury in July, the logical question was asked: Would Joshua Kalu move back to cornerback?

NU was thinner at corner, but coach Mike Riley leaned toward keeping Kalu at safety. And then defensive coordinator Bob Diaco said this:

"We believe from an evaluation standpoint, and a future standpoint, he would be a very, very good corner and maybe even a great corner," Diaco said of the Houston native.

"But in my mind, there's no doubt that he is and/or will be one of the best safeties in the country, if not the very best safety in the country."

Diaco's comments put an end to any questions.

Kalu is

staying at safety. The combination of Kalu and Aaron Williams gives the Huskers a formidable pair in the secondary.

After all, in the 3-4 alignment, it's "a big, big deal to have great safety play," Diaco said.

Diaco likes a lot about Kalu. "Big, athletic, tall, fast." He's also a demonstrative communicator.

Kalu started the past two seasons at cornerback. He led the team in pass breakups with 11 a year ago. He was fifth on the team in tackles.

It's become very clear how important Kalu is to the Blackshirts, no matter his positioning on the field.

"He's in a position where he not only sees it, but he's now saying stuff, and it's really helping our defense as a whole," NU safeties coach Scott Booker said.





21

LAMAR JACKSON

CORNERBACK, 6-FOOT-3, 210 POUNDS, SOPHOMORE

Jackson still has the frame, now more confident

Lamar Jackson admitted during fall camp, his freshman season was a struggle.

"The days when I felt like things were getting hard, I was shutting down," the California native said. "I would tell myself to shake it off, not take the coaching, not take the criticism, talk back a little bit."

"But now (the coaches) don't really have to say too much. I'm bringing it."

That's music to the ears of Nebraska's coaches. With Chris Jones out until at least November, the Huskers need Jackson's play to match the hype that followed him to campus.

A corner with a lot of size, Jackson played in all 13 games last year, backing up Jones and Joshua Kalu. He finished with 17 tackles, including 14 solo stops.

Jackson's talent has never been in question. But he is more confident, a key trait for cornerbacks coach Donte Williams.

"If you're not confident, and you play DB, you shouldn't be here and you shouldn't be around me," Williams said. "You're in the open field; you're out in space. I like guys that are confident, and borderline cocky. That's how you should be. And if you need somebody that's going to give you confidence, then you already have a problem anyway."



34

DREW BROWN

KICKER, 5-FOOT-11, 200 POUNDS, SENIOR

Brown's steady foot provides foundation for Nebraska

Drew Brown's goals for his final season as a Husker are as steady as his foot.

"I really just want to be able to help the team as much as I can," the Nebraska kicker said at the beginning of fall camp. "I could get caught up in individual goals, whether it's stats or awards, or whatever the case is. But I think if I just focus on helping the team as much as I can, those things will kind of fall in place."

"I don't want to get too caught up in goals statistically. I just want to win as many games as I can."

It's the same approach that has led Brown to a couple of big seasons as Nebraska's kicker. He has made 47 of 62 career field goals, including 12-of-14 as a junior.

He's seventh on NU's all-time scoring charts with 282 points, and he's on the Lou Groza watch list.

Brown is approaching some of his brother's marks. Kris Brown, who kicked on three national championship teams, is second on the NU scoring charts with 388 points, so little brother has a chance to pass him there.

Kris Brown made 57 field goals in college. Drew is 10 behind him.



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DRAWING UP THE X's AND O's

BRENT C. WAGNER
Lincoln Journal Star

College football playbooks have gone digital, and Nick Halberg hopes they never go back.

Halberg is a full-time offensive analyst on the Nebraska coaching staff. He works closely with offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf in designing and distributing the Huskers' book of secrets.



Halberg

Halberg grew up near Portland, Oregon. He started working in the video department for the

Oregon State football team when he was a freshman in college, and kept working his way up.

It wasn't that long ago that football players carried around bulky playbooks filled with hundreds of sheets of paper with plays on them. Now the players are given an iPad with all the plays. It's also a multimedia experience because the play charts also include video of that play, notes from the coaches, and any notes the player makes.

When Halberg was at Oregon State they still printed playbooks for each of the players and coaches.

"When we came here it was my first time using the iPads, and it was life changing for me," Halberg said. "When I was at Oregon State we'd have a paper jam, and I couldn't fix it. We'd have to take 75 binders and put them on desk chairs and wheel them across the street to the other athletic office to use their copier, and then wheel them all back and fix the playbooks, all at 11 p.m. or mid-



ILLUSTRATION BY CLARK GRELL, JOURNAL STAR

night."

Nebraska was already using digital playbooks when Mike Riley and his staff arrived from Oregon State, so the new staff started using them. Now all the players and coaches have an iPad. Any changes, or new plays, in the playbook can get out to all the players almost instantly.

"In the past it would be anywhere between 500 and 1,000 page binder," Halberg said. "Now we're able to use the iPad, and however many plays we have we can load them one by one into the iPad. The beauty of that is the guys are able to find things a lot easier. They're able to search the name of a play and it will take them right to it, rather than having to remember where it was in the binder."

The technology has saved a lot of time for the staff, and given the players a better way to learn.

"The best part I think is the

ability to load an example of film on the same picture of the play itself," Halberg said. "It's just a little green triangle in the bottom right hand corner. They can look at the picture and look at what their position has in the picture, and then watch a clip of film of it and they're able to have an example that we think is good for them to study from."

The coaches don't teach all the plays at once, starting with about 100 plays and building up.

"I'd say by the end of fall camp we'll get through maybe 500 plays," Halberg said. "We would never carry that much into a game, but in camp you're trying to work on some things that you can draw back on. At least you've repped it if you have an opponent you might like it against. You might have an opponent where you're like, 'That's not going to be very good against them,' so you don't have it that week."

Once the season starts the coaches have a better feeling for who can make plays, and that helps in picking out plays.

"You're definitely looking at plays for players; that's a big part of it, and sometimes it takes a little time to say 'OK this guy's really a playmaker, he does this well so we need to do more of that,'" Langsdorf said. "And I think that's a big part of it is, you're making sure you're running things that are good and putting your players in good positions to make plays."

While the playbook won't always change a lot, there are new plays even since spring football ended.

Parts of Halberg's job is to study what NFL teams, and college teams that are good on offense, are doing.

"We actually found a play in the red zone," Halberg said. "We made a cutup of every touchdown pass

In the playbook

JUNIOR I-BACK DEVINE OZIGBO

Video games and pass protections: "I spend at least 1 1/2 hours per day, on average, just going over little things. And sometimes I'll do it in between things, like, I'll be playing a 'Call of Duty' game. It's just every day for a little bit just to keep refreshing it. I'll just pick one thing. Like I'll pick a protection, and see how it looks against these fronts, or I'll pick a run, and see how it looks against these fronts."

JUNIOR WIDE RECEIVER BRYAN REIMERS

Make time for study: "You have to spend your time outside of here looking at it, otherwise it's way too complex to just only look at it here. So you really got to work on it away from the stadium too. And I think that really helped me out, and taking notes. And also just talking to the other receivers about it. Maybe they know something you don't, or you know something they don't, and you can help each other out. That's kind of how it was that first year with this staff learning everything."

in the red zone for the NFL, and there was this one play that three or four different teams ran and it was really good and it was similar to some stuff we've already done, so we went ahead and put that in. So every once in a while there'll be some new thoughts or new ideas between spring and summer, but for the most part it's going to be the same. Or maybe it will be the same route combination, but we'll do it out of a different formation or difference protection."

Once the season begins, for each opponent there will be a new playbook, which will also include the scouting report. The Huskers go into each week with a list of about 150 plays they may use that week.

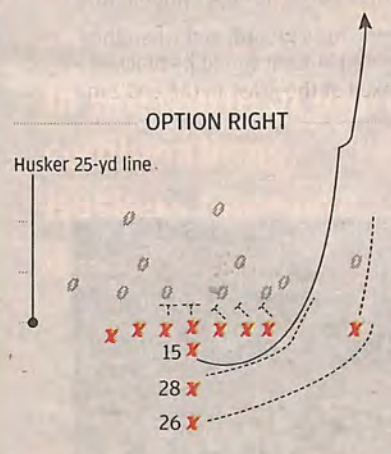
Reach the writer at 402-473-7435 or bwagner@journalstar.com. On Twitter @LJSSportsWagner.



SKETCHING PLAYS

91

Speaking of playbooks and drawing up plays ... How do some of the greatest offensive plays in Nebraska football history look on paper? For the players involved, and the fans, there not just X's and O's. They're pieces of history.



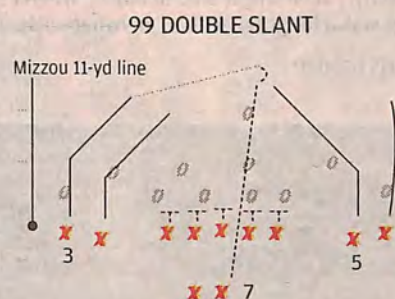
HOW MANY GATORS DOES IT TAKE?

The play: Traditional option right.

The situation: The game was well in hand, Nebraska leading Florida 42-18 late in the third quarter of the 1996 Fiesta Bowl. But if the Gators hadn't already lost all hope, they soon would as Tommie Frazier took the snap on second down from the Nebraska 25-yard line, starting an option to the right as he had so many times before. Frazier was quickly 10 yards upfield after shaking off a few arm tackles, but then things started to get pretty weird. He encountered a gang of Gators 65 yards from the end zone and seemingly had nowhere to go, but one by one they fell away. Pretty soon Frazier was all alone on an easy jog to the end zone, and a stunned Jim Nantz was wondering: "How many tackles can one man break?" Seven. One man can break seven tackles, and burn a memory in the minds of Nebraska and Florida fans alike in the process.

They said it: "People should take their Heisman Trophy votes back and do it over. Without a doubt, Tommie Frazier is the best player in college football." — Husker defensive lineman Jason Peter

— Alex Lantz



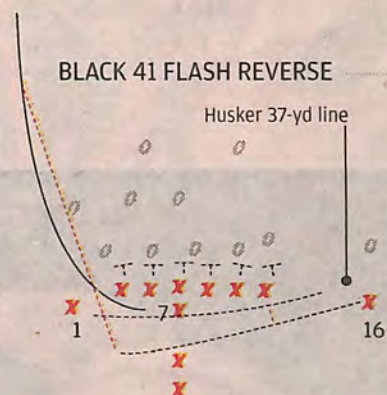
OVER THE MIDDLE ... JUGGLED ...

The play: 99 double slant, or, the Flea Kicker.

The situation: Trailing Missouri by seven points with 7 seconds left, Nebraska's hopes for a national championship hung in the balance. Nebraska considered running option left with Scott Frost and Ahman Green. They instead called "99 double slant" — four wide receivers, two on each side of the formation, all running slants. Frost fired over the middle, Shevin Wiggins' right foot swung into the air, and freshman Matt Davison came out of nowhere to make a diving catch that saved the game and the season.

They said it: "I remember flying home thinking, 'Man, we can still win the national championship.' That's how big this was." — Davison

— Chris Basnett



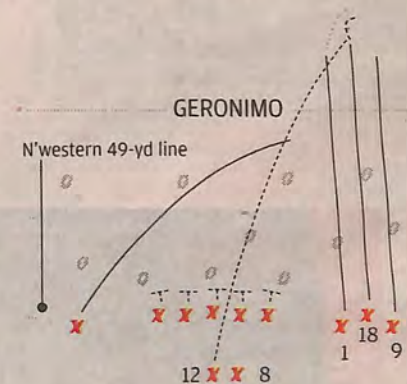
A HEISMAN STRIKE

The play: Black 41 Flash Reverse.

The situation: After struggling offensively for the most of the game, the No. 2 Huskers led the No. 3 Sooners 13-10 with 6 minutes to go in 2001. Facing a first-and-10 at the NU 37-yard line, Huskers coach Frank Solich reached into his bag of tricks. The play started in standard I-formation, strong right, with I-back Thunder Collins, lined up at receiver, in motion from the left side. Collins took a handoff from Eric Crouch, then flipped a pitch to freshman receiver Mike Stuntz on a reverse back to the left side of the field. Stuntz, who is left-handed and was recruited as a quarterback but moved to wingback in preseason camp, saw Crouch sprinting downfield three steps ahead of Oklahoma defensive tackle Kory Klein. Crouch raced down the field for the 63-yard touchdown in what has become the defining play of his Heisman Trophy-winning season. Nebraska went on to a 20-10 win, also snapping Oklahoma's 20-game winning streak.

They said it: Crouch said he remembers being shocked when Solich called the play into the huddle. "We practiced it all week, but it didn't work well in practice at all," Crouch said via email earlier this month. "But if you're going to do something tricky then first down is a good time."

— Clint Robus



AIR JORDAN

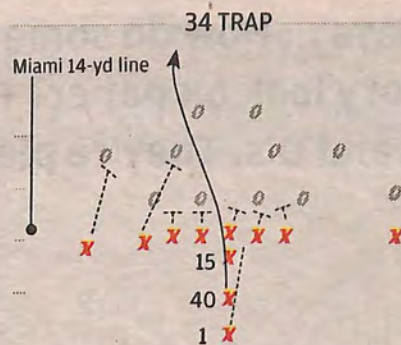
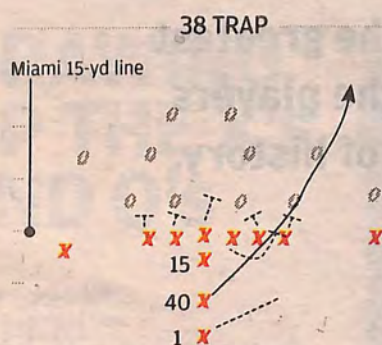
The play: Geronimo.

The situation: Trailing Northwestern 24-21 with 1:20 left, Nebraska began its final drive at its 17-yard line with no timeouts and a quarterback, Ron Kellogg III, who started the 2013 season No. 3 on the depth chart. Ameer Abdullah caught a short pass and did some tough running to pick up a first down on fourth-and-15. After a couple of short passes followed by an incompleteness, Kellogg dropped back for a final play with four seconds on the clock. The strong-armed Omaha native let fly a ball that was deflected into Westerkamp's hands in the end zone. Westerkamp, a redshirt freshman at the time, held on to the 49-yard Hail Mary for his first career touchdown, sparking the celebration and one of the loudest roars heard in a long time at Memorial Stadium.

They said it: "I get asked about it all the time still," said Westerkamp, a native of suburban Chicago. "When I think of the play, it brings back memories of that entire game and how it was such a surreal moment. I was very fortunate to be on the receiving end of that play and I will never forget it. It was crazy to be playing a hometown team like Northwestern as well."

— Steven M. Sipple

SKETCHING PLAYS



SCHLESINGER TRAPS MIAMI

The plays: 38 trap; 34 trap.

The situation: Trailing Miami 17-9 late in the fourth quarter of the 1995 Orange Bowl, Nebraska's vaunted rushing attack turned to its least-heralded weapon to close out the Hurricanes. Cory Schlesinger first scored on "38 trap," following right guard Brenden Stai to paydirt with 7:38 left. Less than five minutes later, Schlesinger busted loose off a block from center Aaron Graham on "34 trap" to score the game-winning points with 2:46 to go, somersaulting into the end zone and giving coach Tom Osborne his first national title.

They said it: "We practiced those trap plays, just for Miami, for a month, and when they called it in the huddle, I didn't think a thing about it because I knew it would be blocked perfectly," Schlesinger said in 2014. "When I scored, I looked at the grass in the end zone and it was a lot greener than anywhere else on the field."

— Chris Basnett



Cory Schlesinger rumbles in for a game-winning touchdown against Miami during the 1994 season.

JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

DRAWING UP THE LOOK

In the world of uniform combinations, Huskers have one design built to last



SCOTT BRUHN, NEBRASKA COMMUNICATIONS

CLINT ROBUS
Lincoln Journal Star

There's not a lot of mystery, Jay Terry said, behind the iconic block "N," the red jerseys, the white pants.

Simple. Clean. Consistent.

"The red and the white ... it pops," said Terry, Nebraska football's head equipment manager.

In a college football landscape that increasingly over the last decade has seen programs experiment more and more with multiple helmet-jersey combinations and more and more alternate uniforms, the Nebraska look has largely been untouched dating back to the storied days of the mid-1990s.

Part of the underlying issue with alternate uniforms, Terry said, is if you turn on the TV and you don't know what team you're even watching. Turn on the TV and you see those tenets of the Husker uniform, and you know.

"It's been a tradition the way it is, and that's one thing over the years that I always think of when we do our uniform is 'We've got

to keep it the same,'" Terry said. "When people turn on the TV and they see that helmet, they know it's Nebraska."

Now, Nebraska has tinkered. An Adidas school since 1995, there is the infamous gusset experiment of 2002 where the pants had inserts running down the legs. That was Terry's first season as head equipment manager, he's been an equipment manager since 1997, and the uniform decision was already done when he was hired to the position.

"The next year, we switched back," Terry said. "We have some stuff that makes uniforms look different, but we've kept them the same."

That stuff largely relates to technology in the pants and jerseys; the materials Adidas uses can look different. The school has held to the philosophy of keeping the overall uniform look the same, but the way things have to be cut, sown and inserted changes year-to-year with the tech.

"There's a reason we don't wear mesh-holed jerseys with their stomachs showing like they did

in '95-'97," Terry said.

And that's how Adidas fits into the larger uniform picture. They work on the tech (the Husker uniforms are currently made with the Adidas techfit compression technology), then shows NU the artwork, which has been signed off on, starting with the administration and on through the football staff.

Terry has some input, but it's mainly administration and above making the final decision on uniforms. The process is the same with alternate uniforms: Adidas pitches ideas and themes to the administration, and there's some back and forth of "we like this, we don't like this, let's look at this."

Adidas also has a representative in Memorial Stadium who works with the equipment staff on a daily basis and serves as contact point between all sides. Adidas does not make its on-site property managers available to the media and a request through Adidas public relations for input from the uniform team that works with Nebraska was not returned in time for publication.

Truthfully, Terry said, any uniform maker would like to switch the uniform every year to increase merchandise sales (Oregon — cough — Oregon).

"But I think Adidas realizes, and they're a good partner with us, that with us that's not who we are," Terry said. "So I think you kind of have to know your situation. For some teams, that does work though, switching it up every year. Because that's what they're known for, that's what they get recruits for."

"As long as both groups come together knowing the situation, and I think they've been great partners with us on that, keeping our look clean and the way we want it."

So what does Terry hear from fans and others who are, or aren't, for changes and tweaks? He gets a few emails and sees some posting on the message boards. Husker players, for instance, have been in favor of the all-white uniforms, citing a cool, clean look.

Sometimes competition necessitates all-white or all-red. Terry

recalled the game at Fresno State game in 2014. He pushed for all white because he knew that Fresno State was coming out wearing all red — helmets, jerseys, pants. But this year's regular uniforms, he said, should trend more to the traditional white over red for road games and what coach Mike Riley decides.

Terry also thinks the uniforms, alternate or regular, shouldn't be a distraction, and fans sometimes take the changes and looks a little out of proportion. But he does approve of this year's alternates, which are a throwback to the 1997 national championship team to be worn Oct. 7 against Wisconsin.

With the Nebraska's primary color scheme red and white, it gives the uniform team a year off from trying to come up with something new and different.

"There's only so much you can do to try and not be re-doing something," Terry said. "This gives us a good year of kind of taking a break, honoring the '97 team. I think it's kind of fun and it will be pretty cool to do."

Frame work THE SCHEDULE

Nebraska's 2017 schedule features three games against teams from Illinois, two Friday contests and a trip to Pac-12 country. More importantly, after September, the Huskers will certainly have their work cut out for them. How might things play out? Steven M. Sipple takes a look at each game.



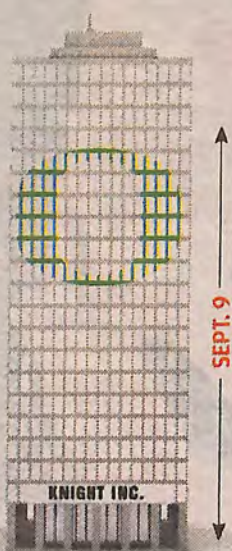
ARKANSAS STATE

7 P.M., BTN
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 5/10

The buildup: Arkansas State has won or shared five of the past six Sun Belt titles and is 20-4 in conference play in three years under coach Blake Anderson. But this is a program forever looking for wins that raise eyebrows nationally. Winning at night in Lincoln just might qualify. As for Nebraska, there is a ton of fan anticipation to size up Bob Diaco's 3-4 defense and Tanner Lee's strong right arm.

How we size it up: Arkansas State, led by hard-charging defensive end Ja'Von Rölland-Jones, will make plays here and there and perhaps keep it close much of the night, with "night" being the key word. Memorial Stadium is a special place at any time of day, but especially at night. The Red Wolves hunger for an upset, but it won't happen on this night.



OREGON

3:30 P.M., FOX
(Autzen Stadium, Eugene, Oregon)

Program standing: 8

The buildup: Nebraska fans are anxious to gauge Lee's mental toughness, and here's a meaningful barometer. Autzen Stadium has a small capacity (54,000), but it gets loud and ornery. Speaking of tests: How will Diaco's defense hold up against Royce Freeman and a band of excellent Oregon running backs? The Ducks will try to avenge last season's 35-32 loss in Lincoln.

How we size it up: The game figures to be close throughout. Oregon's offense will inflict ample pain on Diaco's crew. But keep in mind, the Ducks' defense last season was awful, and first-year head coach Willie Taggart has said the roster he inherited was "weak" for a Power Five program. Freeman, though, is anything but weak — and he ultimately will be the difference for a Ducks squad that many believe to be a legit top-25 outfit.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS

11 A.M., FS1
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 4

The buildup: There won't be a lot of buildup for this game, and that factor — along with the early kickoff — could be significant challenges for Nebraska. Thing is, top-tier teams avoid sizable mood swings and losses to inferior opponents. Perhaps Lee's even-keel nature will help keep Nebraska on track.

How we size it up: We envision a difficult test for Nebraska. Remember, Northern Illinois had double-digit victories in five straight seasons from 2010-14. So, the program has a sturdy foundation. The 2017 Huskies have no shortage of playmakers on offense, but their leaky defense ultimately will keep them from pulling off an upset.



RUTGERS

TV TBA
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 3

The buildup: It's the Big Ten opener for both teams, so there's significance in that regard. Rutgers was 0-9 in the conference last season and was outscored by a combined 224-0 by Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State and Michigan State. Husker fans will be expecting a waltz.

How we size it up: Rutgers has a few notable playmakers. But most noteworthy of all is that Jerry Kill is now running the Scarlet Knights offense. In addition, fifth-year senior receiver Janarion Grant (5-foot-10, 172 pounds) returns after breaking his ankle early last season. He had 20 catches in four games before his injury. Bottom line, Rutgers will score some points, but not nearly enough of them to win.

Program standing rating scale
1 = Program in need of a remodel
10 = Program is the Taj Mahal of college football



ILLINOIS

7 P.M., FS1
(Memorial Stadium, Champaign, Illinois)

Program standing: 4

The buildup: The Friday night factor gives this game some intrigue, as does Nebraska's last visit to this stadium — a 14-13 defeat on a windy, gray day in October of 2015. For Nebraska, this is the calm before the storm with a game against Wisconsin looming.

How we size it up: Nebraska struggled with Illinois last season in Lincoln, trailing 13-10 at halftime before pulling away with a 21-point fourth quarter. But that Illini squad had a strong defensive line, an area that may now be a weakness. If the Huskers are dialed-in, a two-touchdown win feels likely.



WISCONSIN

TV TBA
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 8.5

The buildup: Wisconsin is 5-1 against Nebraska since the Huskers began play in the Big Ten in 2011. The Badgers prevailed 23-17 in overtime in October in Madtown, where the Huskers held their own in the trenches. Same goes for 2015, when Wisconsin won by two points in Lincoln. It's time for NU to assert itself in this series. Another close loss would be of no consolation.

How we size it up: Nebraska should have a great chance to win this game in what figures to be an electrifying atmosphere, as the Huskers don alternate uniforms in the mold of the program's 1997 look. It's easy to envision yet another extremely close game in the series, with Lee's steady presence perhaps being the difference. The Huskers know by now they must be ready for a physical brawl against a program that seldom beats itself. The good news for NU is UW's offensive line, though experienced, doesn't appear to be a vintage Badger group.



OHIO STATE

TV TBA
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 10

The buildup: Nebraska players will be asked frequently about last season's 62-3 loss at the Horseshoe. That's pretty predictable, right? Also predictable is this: It would be very surprising if Ohio State comes to Lincoln with more than one loss (the Buckeyes play host to Oklahoma on Sept. 9 in easily their toughest game before Oct. 14). Bottom line, Nebraska is trying to catch up with the Big Ten's premier program. Is the gap really as wide as last season indicated?

How we size it up: If you're a Nebraska fan, you're probably going to pray for Ohio State to suffer a letdown, and that's entirely possible because last year's game could work against the Buckeyes psychologically. As for the matchup from a personnel standpoint, Ohio State's talented and deep defensive line has to be Nebraska's foremost concern. If the Buckeyes were to find themselves in a jam, they have a smooth and savvy senior quarterback, J.T. Barrett, in whom to trust.



PURDUE

TV TBA
(Ross-Ade Stadium,
West Lafayette, Indiana)

Program standing: 3

The buildup: Or maybe we should call this the "come-down." After monster home games against traditional Big Ten powers, Nebraska heads to the quiet of West Lafayette, where pregame traffic is virtually nonexistent and the stadium (57,236) will be about half full. Ah, but there will be nagging questions about the Huskers' loss to the Boilermakers in 2015, one of the lowest points in the modern era of NU football.

How we size it up: Let's be real: This is a scary game for Nebraska partly because of where it falls on the schedule. What's more, Purdue features a talented junior quarterback in David Blough (6-1, 200), who's given the Huskers headaches on two previous occasions. First-year head coach Jeff Brohm is highly regarded, but he inherits a roster sorely lacking in depth on defense. That tends to catch up with teams in late October and November.



NORTHWESTERN

TV TBA
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 6.5

The buildup: And so it begins, Nebraska's rugged stretch of November games that will test the mettle of the entire program. Many fans and pundits regard Northwestern as a rising program, especially with its new \$260 million athletic complex on the banks of Lake Michigan — with a gorgeous view of the Chicago skyline. As long as Pat Fitzgerald is steering the ship, Northwestern will be a tough and well-coached team most of the time.

How we size it up: Nebraska played one of its best games of the 2016 season last September at Northwestern, churning out a 24-13 triumph that was more convincing than the score indicates. The Wildcats will probably present a stiffer challenge this time around. Quarterback Clayton Thorson and running back Justin Jackson operate behind an offensive line that returns four starters. The defense is salty. Buckle up, Husker fans, this one likely will be decided in the final few possessions.



MINNESOTA

TV TBA
(TCF Bank Stadium,
Minneapolis)

Program standing: 6

The buildup: There certainly is some intrigue in the coaching matchup: P.J. Fleck, 36, the youngest head coach in the Power Five conferences, squares off against 64-year-old Mike Riley. When Fleck's squad encounters Nebraska, it will be coming off back-to-back road tests against Iowa and Michigan. Considering the Gophers' lack of depth in their lines, one wonders if the physical nature of those two opponents will soften up Fleck's crew for NU.

How we size it up: Nebraska struggled to put away Minnesota last season in Lincoln before prevailing 24-17, and this year's game figures to be another close one. Give a slight edge to Nebraska if only because the Huskers likely will be much better equipped at quarterback (assuming Tanner Lee is still healthy in mid-November). However, the Gophers' running back duo of Rodney Smith and Shannon Brooks is always a threat to grind out yards and control the clock.



PENN STATE

TV TBA
(Beaver Stadium, State
College, Pennsylvania)

Program standing: 8.5

The buildup: What an opportunity for Nebraska, which likely will be a heavy underdog against a Penn State squad that returns 18 starters from last season's Big Ten championship outfit. It's the sort of win Riley could use to show skeptics that his offense can roll up big numbers even in cold-weather games against high-grade competition.

How we size it up: What an opportunity for Husker defensive coordinator Bob Diaco. His defense will try to solve a Nittany Lion offense that last season finished with the fifth-highest scoring average in school history — 37.6 points per game. The undefeated 1994 Nittany Lions own the school record at 47.0. With Trace McSorley's prowess in the passing game and Saquon Barkley's premier power and speed as a runner, it's difficult to imagine many defenses slowing down James Franklin's squad this season.



IOWA

3 P.M., FS1
(Memorial Stadium, Lincoln)

Program standing: 7

The buildup: It seems likely the word "bloodbath" will come up in discussion as this game nears. After last November's game in Iowa City, former Nebraska defensive coordinator Mark Banker said Iowa's practices must be "like a bloodbath" because of how physically the Hawkeyes played in the 40-10 victory. Here's something else that will come up in conversation: The Hawkeyes have won three of the past four meetings.

How we size it up: This feels like a season in which Nebraska should have the upper hand against its border rival. Iowa entered August unsettled at quarterback and with a dearth of playmakers at the receiver positions. Here's the deal, though: Nebraska players need to approach the game with the same energy that Iowa does. The Hawkeyes just seem to want this one more. If the Huskers show up ready for a street fight, they should end the regular season on a high note.



ARKANSAS STATE

Red Wolves (8-5 last year)

Sept. 2 | 7 p.m. | BTN | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Ja'Von Rolland-Jones (below) will be one of the best defensive players the Huskers see all season. The 2016 Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year, Rolland-Jones is the preseason Defensive Player of the Year this season.

Arkansas State's defense will be its strength. Of the Red Wolves' eight preseason all-conference players, five are on that side of the ball, coming from all three levels (line, linebackers, defensive backs).



Off. **5** RETURNING STARTERS **4** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Arkansas State needs its defense to be good, because the offense is still a work in progress under fourth-year coach Blake Anderson. The Red Wolves were 93rd in the country last season in total offense and 74th in points per game.

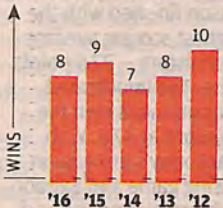
LET'S DRAW IT UP

The Red Wolves scored one for the little guy, getting a home game against Miami this season. Arkansas State also avoids preseason conference favorite Appalachian State and gets Troy, picked second in the league, at home. A trip to the Sun Belt championship game isn't out of the question, especially with that defense.

SCHEDULE

S2 at Nebraska
S9 Miami
S16 Ark.-Pine Bluff
S23 at SMU
O4 at Ga. Southern
O14 Coastal Carolina
O19 La.-Lafayette
O28 at New Mexico St.
N11 at South Alabama
N8 Texas St.
N25 at La.-Monroe
D2 Troy

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Steve Roberts coached at the school from 2002-2010, oversaw the program's name change from Indians to Red Wolves, and recruited many of the players who played in three conference championships and three bowl games with two 10-win seasons between 2011-2013.



OREGON

Ducks (4-8 last year)

Sept. 9 | 3:30 p.m. | Fox | Eugene, Ore.

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Coach Willie Taggart loves his running backs, telling The Oregonian recently that he's open to having three of them on the field at any one time.

Royce Freeman (below), Tony Brooks-James and Kani Benoit combined for 2,016 yards last year.

The backs will run behind a **line that returns four players** who started last season as freshmen, as well as senior Tyrell Crosby, who was a starter until a foot injury against Nebraska ended his season.



Off. **9** RETURNING STARTERS **6** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

That defense. Woof. The Ducks didn't allow fewer than 26 points in any game last season, gave up more than 40 six times, more than 50 three times, and got 70 hung on them by Washington. The unit finished the year ranked 126th out of 128 FBS teams in total defense.

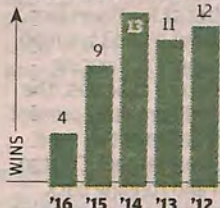
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Oregon was an unmitigated disaster in 2016, finishing with a losing record for the first time since 2004 and just the second time since 1993. Taggart was hired away from South Florida to clean up the mess, and there's plenty of reason to think he can do it quickly. The cupboard isn't exactly bare in Eugene.

SCHEDULE

S2 Southern Utah
S9 Nebraska
S16 at Wyoming
S23 at Arizona St.
S30 California
O7 Washington St.
O14 at Stanford
O21 at UCLA
O28 Utah
N4 at Washington
N18 Arizona
N25 Oregon St.

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: On the field, Mike Belotti and Chip Kelly built Oregon into a powerhouse. But it's Phil Knight's Nike empire that has put the Ducks on the map as much as any player or coach. Knight has given hundreds of millions of dollars to his alma mater.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Huskies (5-7 last year)

Sept. 16 | 11 a.m. | FSI | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Senior running back **Jordan Huff (below)** has nearly 1,500 career rushing yards and should be in line to be more of a feature back this season. Look for NIU to rely on Marcus Jones, too. He took a medical redshirt in 2016.

Northern Illinois will have an **experienced defense** that paved the way to a 4-1 finish in 2016. The strength on that side lies in the secondary. Cornerback Shawun Lurry was an All-American two years ago.



Off. **5** RETURNING STARTERS **6** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

The Huskies had lousy quarterback luck last season, losing Drew Hare and Anthony Maddie to season-ending injuries and getting mostly ineffective play from Ryan Graham and Daniel Santacaterina. Graham (redshirt junior) and Santacaterina (redshirt sophomore) are back, but have two redshirt freshman and a true freshman behind them.

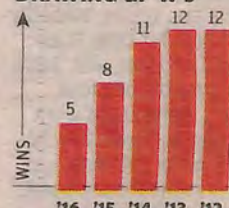
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Like Arkansas State, Northern Illinois was able to get a Power Five school to visit its campus for a home game. The season opener against Boston College should provide a decent gauge for a team that won four of its last five games to end last season.

SCHEDULE

S1 Boston College
S9 E. Illinois
S16 at Nebraska
S30 at San Diego St.
O7 Kent St.
O14 at Buffalo
O21 at Bowling Green
O26 E. Michigan
N2 at Toledo
N9 Ball St.
N15 W. Michigan
N24 at C. Michigan

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Jordan Lynch quarterbacked Northern Illinois to the 2013 Orange Bowl with a then-FBS quarterback record 1,751 rushing yards. He surpassed his own record the next season, running for 1,920 yards and becoming a Heisman Trophy finalist.

— Capsules compiled by Chris Basnett, Journal Star

AP FILE PHOTOS

IN NEED OF A MAKEOVER
REBUILDING PHASE
STEADY
STATE OF THE ART

IN NEED OF A MAKEOVER
REBUILDING PHASE
STEADY
STATE OF THE ART

IN NEED OF A MAKEOVER
REBUILDING PHASE
STEADY
STATE OF THE ART



RUTGERS

Scarlet Knights (2-10, 0-9 Big Ten last year)

Sept. 23 | 2:30 p.m. | TV: TBA | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Scarlet Knights senior receiver **Janarion Grant (below)** is one of the most exciting return men in the country, with eight career kickoff and punt returns for touchdowns, but the 5-foot-10, 170-pounder also battled injuries.

Rutgers' defense is young, and certainly took its lumps last season, but it's full of sophomores and juniors who got a lot of playing time last season. LBs Trevor Morris and Deonte Roberts led the team in tackles last year.



Off. **5** RETURNING STARTERS* **8** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Could be any area, but we'll go with the offense, which was shut out four times last season and is now on its eighth offensive coordinator in eight seasons with the hiring of former Minnesota coach Jerry Kill.

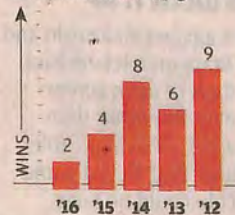
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Rutgers opens the season with a home game against Washington, and also plays Ohio State, Michigan and Penn State. That's a brutal schedule for anyone, much less a team that's at least one more year away from trying to compete for a bowl bid. It's looking like another long season in Piscataway.

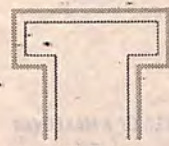
SCHEDULE

S1 Washington
S9 E. Michigan
S16 Morgan St.
S23 at Nebraska
S30 Ohio St.
O14 at Illinois
O21 Purdue
O28 at Michigan
N4 vs. Maryland
N11 at Penn St.
N18 at Indiana
N25 Michigan St.

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Rutgers has never been consistently great, but Greg Schiano came closer than anyone. He led the Scarlet Knights to an 11-2 record and a No. 12 final AP poll ranking in 2006, a season that saw the team reach No. 3 in the AP poll and No. 6 in the BCS.



ILLINOIS

Illini (3-9, 2-7 Big Ten last year)

Sept. 29 | 7 p.m. | FS1 | Champaign, Ill.

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Running backs Kendrick Foster (below) and Reggie Corbin combined for 1,243 yards and nine TDs while averaging 5.9 yards per carry last season against defenses that knew the Illini couldn't throw the ball.

If **Jeff George Jr. or Chayce Crouch** can step up at the quarterback spot, second-year coach Lovie Smith might have a little something cooking there. But. ...



Off. **5** RETURNING STARTERS* **6** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

The Illini were 121st in time of possession, 122nd in scoring offense, 123rd in total offense, 124th in passing efficiency and 127th in total first downs last season. Illinois isn't Rutgers-bad on offense, but it's close. Gotta find more production somehow.

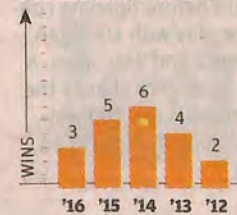
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Meh. Illinois' offense is, to be kind, bad; the defense, on the field way too long last season because of an inept offense, lost much of its star power from last season; and you have to wonder if Lovie Smith, a man who's coached a team to a Super Bowl, ever wonders what he's gotten himself into in Champaign.

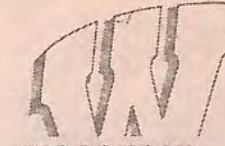
SCHEDULE

S2 Ball St.
S9 W. Kentucky
S15 at South Florida
S29 Nebraska
O7 at Iowa
O14 Rutgers
O21 at Minnesota
O28 Wisconsin
N4 at Purdue
N11 Indiana
N18 at Ohio St.
N25 Northwestern

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Red Grange, one of college football's iconic figures, played for the Illini from 1923-25 and was a three-time All-American who led Illinois to the 1923 national title. In his first collegiate game, he scored three touchdowns against Nebraska.



WISCONSIN

Badgers (11-3, 7-2 Big Ten last year)

Oct. 7 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

The offensive line — left tackle Michael Deiter, left guard Jon Dietzen, center Tyler Biadasz, right guard Beau Benzschawel (below) and right tackle David Edwards — is really good. Maybe the best group in the Big Ten.

And that **defense**, even with the loss of Jack Cichy, will still be nasty. The Badgers still have LB T.J. Edwards and SS D'Cota Dixon. You'll win a lot of games with a good offensive line and a good D.



Off. **9** RETURNING STARTERS* **6** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Sophomore Alex Hornibrook will start at quarterback after splitting time last season with senior Bart Houston, but the two guys battling to be his backup are unproven. Jack Coan and Kare Lyles are both true freshman getting their first taste of Division I football this fall.

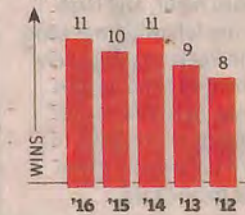
LET'S DRAW IT UP

The Badgers' toughest road game will likely be either a trip to BYU on Sept. 16 or the contest in Lincoln two weeks later. Wisconsin gets Northwestern, Michigan and Iowa at home, and avoids Ohio State and Penn State altogether. That's pretty cushy for the team picked by most to win the Big Ten West.

SCHEDULE

S1 Utah St.
S9 FAU
S16 at BYU
S30 Northwestern
O7 at Nebraska
O14 Purdue
O21 Maryland
O28 at Illinois
N4 at Indiana
N11 Iowa
N18 Michigan
N25 at Minnesota

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Who else but Barry Alvarez, who in 1990 took over a program that hadn't had a winning season since 1984 and turned it into a Big Ten power and perennial Rose Bowl contender. He has been the school's AD since 2004 and stepped down from coaching in 2005.



OHIO STATE

Buckeyes (11-2, 8-1 Big Ten last year)

Oct. 14 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

How about **J.T. Barrett (below)**, who will go down as perhaps the best quarterback in Ohio State's storied history?

Or how about that **defensive line**, which features five, yes five, players — Tyquan Lewis, Sam Hubbard, Jalyn Holmes, Nick Bosa and Dre'Mont Jones — who will be drafted in 2018? It is, as usual, an embarrassment of riches in Columbus.



Off. **8** RETURNING STARTERS **7** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

The Buckeyes need a couple of receivers to step up and must replace three first-round NFL Draft picks in their secondary. There's talent at those positions, but much of it is unproven. Kevin Wilson was brought in to fix an offense that was shut out in last season's College Football Playoff semifinal loss to Clemson.

LET'S DRAW IT UP

Get past a sneaky-tough opener at Indiana on a Thursday night, and Oklahoma the following weekend, and the Buckeyes will likely be unbeaten heading into the game at Nebraska before getting a bye week to prepare for a home game against Penn State.

SCHEDULE

A31 at Indiana
S9 Oklahoma
S16 Army
S23 UNLV
S30 at Rutgers
O7 Maryland
O14 at Nebraska
O28 Penn St.
N4 at Iowa
N11 Michigan St.
N18 Illinois
N25 at Michigan

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Urban Meyer is 61-6 through his first five seasons as head coach in Columbus. Many greats have come and gone in Ohio State's 127-year history. Meyer stands with all of them.



PURDUE

Boilermakers (3-9, 1-8 Big Ten last year)

Oct. 28 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | West Lafayette, Ind.

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

David Blough (below) led the Big Ten in passing yards (3,352) and was second in TD passes (25) as a sophomore, but his 119.4 pass efficiency was last in the league. First-year coach Jeff Brohm has an intriguing signal caller to build around.

Running backs Markell Jones (junior) and Brian Lankford-Johnson (sophomore) both took their lumps last season but should also benefit from a new offensive system.



Off. **5** RETURNING STARTERS **9** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Purdue had the worst defense in the Big Ten, and the worst turnover margin in the nation, last season. No one is expecting miracles in either category, but even a little bit of improvement would go a long way.

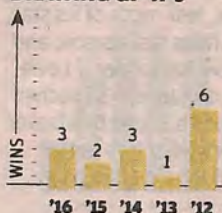
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Just a nasty early schedule for new coach Jeff Brohm. Home games against Louisville and Ohio, a preseason favorite in the MAC, to start, then a road game at feisty Missouri before opening conference play with Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. A better-than-zero chance the Boilermakers are still winless heading to Rutgers on Oct. 21.

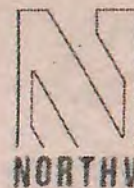
SCHEDULE

S2 vs. Louisville
S8 Ohio
S16 at Missouri
S23 Michigan
O7 Minnesota
O14 at Wisconsin
O21 at Rutgers
O28 Nebraska
N4 Illinois
N11 at Northwestern
N18 at Iowa
N25 Indiana

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Joe Tiller brought the spread offense to the Big Ten in 1997, coached Purdue to the 2001 Rose Bowl and left as the school's all-time leader in wins. That Drew Brees guy he coached from 1997-2000 wasn't too bad either.



NORTHWESTERN

Wildcats (7-6, 5-4 Big Ten last year)

Nov. 4 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Running back Justin Jackson (below) is a stud. It was he, not Saquon Barkley, who lead the Big Ten in rushing last season with 1,524 yards. He'll go down as an all-timer in Northwestern's football history.

Quarterback Clayton Thorson lost his favorite target, Austin Carr, to graduation, but the junior gives the Wildcats experience at a key position.



Off. **8** RETURNING STARTERS **7** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Northwestern's ability to play to the level of its opponent is almost uncanny. Last season it was back-to-back losses to Western Michigan (who turned out to be pretty good) and FCS Illinois State at home to start the year. The Wildcats later went on the road and beat Iowa, pushed Ohio State in a four-point loss and beat No. 23 Pitt in the Pinstripe Bowl. Gotta find a way to win the games you should win while still competing with the big boys.

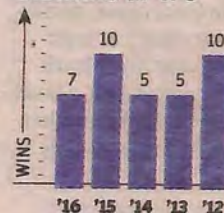
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Games against Wisconsin and Penn State on back-to-back Saturdays to open conference play, but other than that, a mostly manageable schedule. That Nov. 4 game in Lincoln could be huge.

SCHEDULE

S2 Nevada
S9 Duke
S16 Bowling Green
S30 at Wisconsin
O7 Penn St.
O14 at Maryland
O21 Iowa
O28 Michigan St.
N4 at Nebraska
N11 Purdue
N18 Minnesota
N25 at Illinois

DRAWING UP W's



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Pat Fitzgerald was the star of Northwestern's Cinderella 1995 Rose Bowl team, and is now the second-longest tenured coach in the Big Ten. He'll go down as perhaps the most-beloved Northwestern athlete of all time.



Golden Gophers (9-4, 5-4 Big Ten last year)

Nov. 11 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | Minneapolis, Minn.

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

New coach **P.J. Fleck (below)** is a force of nature, and he'll bring a shot of enthusiasm to a program known for its physicality, yes, but also its vanilla style of play. Fleck was hired after leading Western Michigan to the Cotton Bowl.

Junior running backs **Rodney Smith** (1,158 yards last season) and **Shannon Brooks** (650 yards) give the Gophers a potent 1-2 bunch in the backfield. Smith received the bulk of the carries late in 2016 season.



Off. **8** RETURNING STARTERS **4** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

The passing offense, passing efficiency and total offense all ranked in the bottom 21 in the nation last season. Mitch Leidner has graduated, and five of the Gophers' six quarterbacks this year are either true freshmen or redshirt freshmen. Tough to row the boat when you don't have an experienced captain directing things.

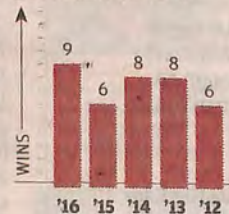
LET'S DRAW IT UP

The schedule is backloaded, with games against Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, Northwestern and Wisconsin to end the season. Depending on how well Fleck navigates Minnesota through its first seven games, which are all winnable, that stretch could determine the Gophers' bowl destination.

SCHEDULE

A31	Buffalo
S9	at Oregon St.
S16	Middle Tenn. St.
S30	Maryland
O7	at Purdue
O14	Michigan St.
O21	Illinois
O28	at Iowa
N4	at Michigan
N11	Nebraska
N18	at Northwestern
N25	Wisconsin

DRAWING UP W'S



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Running back Bruce Smith is the school's only Heisman Trophy winner, doing so in 1941 while leading the Gophers to a second straight national title. And Bronko Nagurski is a Minnesota legend after playing fullback and defensive tackle at the school in the late 1920s.



PENN STATE

Nittany Lions (11-3, 8-1 Big Ten last year)

Nov. 18 | Time: TBA | TV: TBA | State College, Pa.

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Based on most preseason analysis, running back **Saquon Barkley (below)** is an untacklable hell machine sent from the future to destroy defenses and alter the landscape of college football as we know it.

Actually, that might not be too far off. Team him with quarterback **Trace McSorley**, who if he stays healthy will end up as the most prolific Penn State quarterback of all time, and that's an offense that'll win you more than a couple of games.



Off. **9** RETURNING STARTERS **7** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

If the Nittany Lions are going to make a serious run at the College Football Playoff, their defense is going to have to improve. Penn State gave up 42, 49 and 52 points in its three losses last season, and in two of those defeats scored 39 and 49 points.

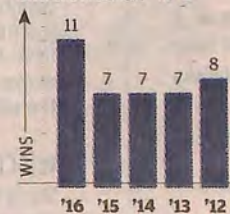
LET'S DRAW IT UP

Was the 8-1 finish to last season a fluke, or is Penn State back for good? Remember, this team got drilled by Michigan early last season and needed overtime to beat Minnesota. The Big Ten opener is at Iowa. Throw in back-to-back games against Michigan and Ohio State, and the Nittany Lions will be plenty battle-tested by the time Nebraska rolls into town.

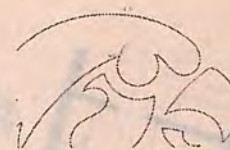
SCHEDULE

S2	Akron
S9	at Pittsburgh
S16	Georgia St.
S23	at Iowa
S30	Indiana
O7	at Northwestern
O21	Michigan
O28	at Ohio St.
N4	at Michigan St.
N11	Rutgers
N18	Nebraska
N25	at Maryland

DRAWING UP W'S



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: There is no talking about Joe Paterno without recognizing his role in the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal that shook the Penn State program to its core beginning in 2011. The fact remains, however, that Paterno turned the program into a national name.



IOWA

Hawkeyes (8-5, 6-3 Big Ten last year)

Nov. 24 | 3 p.m. | FS1 | Memorial Stadium

THE FOUNDATIONS (STRENGTHS)

Start with a physical running game, which will feature junior **Akrum Wadley** (below; 1,081 yards, 10 touchdowns last season) and graduate transfer **James Butler** (1,336 yards, 12 touchdowns for Nevada).

Senior linebacker **Josey Jewell** leads a defense that will be among the Big Ten's best. A three-year captain, Jewell (124 tackles last year) will not wow you with speed, but he's physical and has a high football IQ.



Off. **9** RETURNING STARTERS **6** Def.

COULD USE A RE-DRAFT

Quarterback CJ Bethard is gone, and the only other player on the Iowa roster who threw a pass last season is sophomore Nathan Stanley, who was 5-for-9. It remains to be seen whether first-year offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz will add any spice to Iowa's offense, but no matter what he does, he'll do it with an inexperienced signal caller.

LET'S DRAW IT UP

A home game against a good Wyoming team, followed by the annual matchup with Iowa State, might spell trouble for a team breaking in a new offensive coordinator and quarterback. Things don't get any easier with a Big Ten opener against Penn State.

SCHEDULE

S2	Wyoming
S9	at Iowa St.
S16	North Texas
S23	Penn St.
S30	at Michigan St.
O7	Illinois
O21	at Northwestern
O28	Minnesota
N4	Ohio St.
N11	at Wisconsin
N18	Purdue
N24	at Nebraska

DRAWING UP W'S



PROGRAM ARCHITECT: Hayden Fry came to Iowa in 1978 on the heels of the Hawkeyes' 17th consecutive nonwinning season. He then hired a marketing group to design Iowa's current logo, had the visitors' locker room painted pink, went to three Rose Bowls and won three Big Ten titles.

THE SCENE BIG TEN FLOOR PLAN



5 BEST NONLEAGUE GAMES

- S2:** Florida vs. Michigan (Arlington, Texas)
- S9:** Nebraska at Oregon
- S9:** Oklahoma at Ohio State
- S16:** Wisconsin at BYU
- S23:** Notre Dame at Michigan State

5 CONFERENCE GAMES THAT COULD MAKE OR BREAK A SEASON

- 07:** Wisconsin at Nebraska
- 021:** Michigan at Penn State
- 028:** Penn State at Ohio State
- N11:** Iowa at Nebraska
- N25:** Ohio State at Michigan

— COMPILED BY
SHEA CARLSON, JOURNAL STAR

3 TEAMS BUILT TO WIN IN INDY

PENN STATE

While the No. 6 Nittany Lions have the tough task of residing in the Big Ten's East Division with Michigan and Ohio State, their run to last year's Rose Bowl proves they can play with the big dogs in any conference. The offseason expectations have been heaped onto Penn State, and for good reason.

Trace McSorley (above) returns under center as a Heisman candidate while running back Saquon Barkley adds a powerful punch on the ground after racking up 1,495 yards and 18 rushing touchdowns in 2016. Marcus Allen will hold down the Nittany Lions' defense from the safety position before likely going in the first round of next year's NFL Draft.

MICHIGAN/OHIO STATE

One of college football's greatest rivalries could possibly dictate a spot in this season's College Football Playoff as it did in 2016 when the Buckeyes narrowly beat the Wolverines in a disputed overtime game. Ohio State was then embarrassed by eventual champion Clemson, so it will likely have revenge on the mind, but will have to get past Penn State and Michigan first. The Wolverines lost 11 of their top 13 tacklers from last season, so you may be seeing a red-faced Jim Harbaugh on the sideline a lot this season. At least a little more than usual.

WISCONSIN

Sorry to say, Husker fans, most national pundits have the Badgers as a runaway favorite in the Big Ten West. The Wisconsin defense is what drives this team, so expect a lot of old-school Big Ten football from the Badgers, with scores like 24-14, 27-21 and sometimes even 14-10.

FIVE PROGRAM BUILDERS

J.T. BARRETT, OHIO STATE

The senior has been through it all during his time at Ohio State, but the Urban Meyer offense has now been sculpted to his abilities. Step back and watch him shine in his final season as the Buckeyes' signal-caller.

TRACE MCSORLEY, PENN STATE

McSorley has developed a reputation as a gunslinger during his time in Happy Valley and it has bolstered his Heisman status coming into 2017.

SAQUON BARKLEY, PENN STATE

The elusive back is the perfect rock in the backfield for the Nittany Lions' upbeat offense. He'll likely be headed for his third straight season of more than 1,000 yards rushing if he can stay healthy.

TYQUAN LEWIS, OHIO STATE

Lewis will anchor one of the nation's best defensive lines in Columbus, and, at 6-foot-4, 265 pounds, with a work ethic to match, he will be hard to miss.

JOSEY JEWELL, IOWA

The senior finished with 124 tackles last season, good for second-most in the Big Ten. He was a Butkus finalist last season and will be in the running once again this year.

BOWL LINEUP '17-18

Date	Bowl	City	Time	TV	Matchup
Dec. 16	New Orleans	New Orleans	Noon	ESPN	Sun Belt vs. C-USA/MWC
Dec. 16	Cure	Orlando, Fla.	1:30 p.m.	CBSN	AAC vs. Sup Belt
Dec. 16	Las Vegas	Las Vegas	2:30 p.m.	ABC	Pac-12 vs. MWC
Dec. 16	New Mexico	Albuquerque, N.M.	3:30 p.m.	ESPN	C-USA vs. MWC
Dec. 16	Camellia	Montgomery, Ala.	7 p.m.	ESPN	MAC vs. Sun Belt
Dec. 19	Boca Raton	Boca Raton, Fla.	6 p.m.	ESPN	AAC vs. C-USA
Dec. 20	Frisco	Frisco, Texas	7 p.m.	ESPN	AAC vs. C-USA/MAC/Sun Belt
Dec. 21	St. Pete	St. Petersburg, Fla.	7 p.m.	ESPN	C-USA vs. AAC
Dec. 22	Bahamas	Nassau, Bahamas	11:30 a.m.	ESPN	MAC vs. Sun Belt
Dec. 22	Idaho Potato	Boise, Idaho	3 p.m.	ESPN	MWC vs. MAC
Dec. 23	Birmingham	Birmingham, Ala.	11 a.m.	ESPN	SEC vs. AAC
Dec. 23	Armed Forces	Fort Worth, Texas	2:30 p.m.	ESPN	Big Ten vs. Army
Dec. 23	Dollar General	Mobile, Ala.	6 p.m.	ESPN	MAC vs. Sun Belt
Dec. 24	Hawaii	Honolulu	7:30 p.m.	ESPN	MWC vs. AAC
Dec. 26	Quick Lane	Detroit	TBA	ESPN	Big Ten vs. ACC
Dec. 26	Heart of Dallas	Dallas	TBA	ESPN	Big 12 vs. C-USA
Dec. 26	Cactus	Phoenix	TBA	ESPN	Big 12 vs. Pac-12
Dec. 27	Independence	Shreveport, La.	12:30 p.m.	ESPN	SEC vs. ACC
Dec. 27	Pinstripe	Bronx, N.Y.	4:15 p.m.	ESPN	Big Ten vs. ACC
Dec. 27	Foster Farms	Santa Clara, Calif.	7:30 p.m.	Fox	Big Ten vs. Big 12

Big Ten bowl tie-ins in bold ACC tie-ins include Notre Dame* New Year's Six Bowl

Date	Bowl	City	Time	TV	Matchup
Dec. 27	Texas	Houston	8 p.m.	ESPN	Big 12 vs. SEC
Dec. 28	Military	Annapolis, Md.	12:30 p.m.	ESPN	AAC vs. ACC
Dec. 28	Camping World	Orlando, Fla.	4:15 p.m.	ESPN	Big 12 vs. ACC
Dec. 28	Holiday	San Diego	5 p.m.	FS1	Big Ten vs. Pac-12
Dec. 28	Alamo	San Antonio	8 p.m.	ESPN	Big 12 vs. Pac-12
Dec. 29	Belk	Charlotte, N.C.	Noon	ESPN	SEC vs. ACC
Dec. 29	Sun	El Paso, Texas	1 p.m.	CBS	Pac-12 vs. ACC
Dec. 29	Music City	Nashville, Tenn.	3:30 p.m.	ESPN	SEC vs. Big Ten/ACC
Dec. 29	Cotton*	Arlington, Texas	7:30 p.m.	ESPN	At-large vs. at-large
Dec. 30	Arizona	Tucson, Ariz.	TBA	CBSN	MWC vs. C-USA
Dec. 30	TaxSlayer	Jacksonville, Fla.	11 a.m.	ESPN	SEC vs. Big Ten/ACC
Dec. 30	Liberty	Nashville, Tenn.	11:30 a.m.	ABC	SEC vs. Big 12
Dec. 30	Fiesta*	Glendale, Ariz.	3 p.m.	ESPN	At-large vs. at-large
Dec. 30	Orange*	Miami, Fla.	7 p.m.	ESPN	ACC vs. Big Ten/SEC
Jan. 1	Outback	Tampa, Fla.	11 a.m.	ESPN2	SEC vs. Big Ten
Jan. 1	Peach*	Atlanta	11:30 a.m.	ESPN	At-large vs. at-large
Jan. 1	Buffalo Wild Wings	Orlando, Fla.	Noon	ABC	SEC vs. Big Ten/ACC
Jan. 1	Rose*	Pasadena, Calif.	4 p.m.	ESPN	National semifinal
Jan. 1	Sugar*	New Orleans	7:45 p.m.	ESPN	National semifinal
Jan. 8	National final	Atlanta	7 p.m.	ESPN	Semifinal winners



Bev Higgins
123 S. 48th Street Suite D
Lincoln, NE 68510
Contact Agent
402-483-2638
bev@bev Higgins.com



Chuck Clifford
2710 S 70th Street Suite 103, Lincoln, NE 68506
Contact Agent
402-483-6955
chuck@chuckclifford.com



Michelle Boden CPCU®
5740 Old Cheney Road, Suite 9
Lincoln, NE 68516
Contact Agent
402-421-1100
michelle.boden.rsf@statefarm.com



Nicole Simon, CLU®
4400 S 70th Street Suite 130
Lincoln, NE 68516
Contact Agent
402-483-4441
nicole@simonsf.com



Tim Wacker
245 S 84th Street Suite W
102 Cherry Hill Building, Lincoln, NE 68510
Contact Agent
402-489-9615
tim.wacker.cg8f@statefarm.com



Genny Noerlinger CPCU®
6710 L Street Suite 110
Lincoln, NE 68510
Contact Agent
402-488-7855
genny@g4genny.com



Dean Hoy
3883 Normal Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68506
Contact Agent
402-489-7171
dean.hoy.b6ip@statefarm.org



John Eshleman
7121 O Street,
Lincoln, NE 68510
Contact Agent
402-483-7578
john.eshleman.kukc@statefarm.com

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① **ALABAMA**
Drawing up a winner: Signal-caller Jalen Hurts didn't play like a freshman last year and he's now a year older. And Bama's defense? Yeah, it remains pretty darn good, too.

Beware of erase marks: The Tide's vertical passing game needs to improve. Easier said than done after the departure of three productive receivers from last year.

Model program: Take your pick — 1978, 1979, 1992, 2009, 2011, 2012 or 2015.

② **USC**
Drawing up a winner: QB Sam Darnold went from not starting to starring in the Rose Bowl in a matter of one season. Now he's the Heisman favorite.

Beware of erase marks: The Men of Troy must replace both offensive tackles and the defense isn't going to scare the lights out of anyone (See Rose Bowl).

Model program: 2004 (national title, Reggie Bush, Matt Leinart).

③ **OHIO STATE**
Drawing up a winner: J.T. Barrett has lost just three games as Ohio State's starting quarterback, and now he has former Indiana coach Kevin Wilson guiding the offense.

Beware of erase marks: Outside of Barrett, who will star on offense? Curtis Samuel's electric playmaking will need to be replaced, and the Buckeyes need to develop some receivers.

Model program: 1968 (national title, Woody Hayes).

④ **PENN STATE**
Drawing up a winner: Behind QB Trace McSorley, RB Saquon Barkley and TE Mike Gesicki, the offense will score a lot of points.

Beware of erase marks: The schedule includes games at Ohio State, at Iowa and at Northwestern, so the road back to Indy is much tougher.

Model program: 1982 (national title, Todd Blackledge).

⑤ **FLORIDA STATE**
Drawing up a winner: RB Dalvin Cook and WR Travis Rudolph are gone, but sophomore QB Deondre Francois showed in 2016 he's capable of shouldering a bigger load.

Beware of erase marks: More question marks surround an offensive line that wasn't always running on all cylinders a year ago.

Model program: 2013 (national title, trailed for only 37 minutes all season).

Built to win in 2017 THE TOP 25 GRID

Nick Saban is a master architect. The coach seems to have his Alabama teams in this position just about every year. The Tide, with few weaknesses, is the team to beat. Teams such as USC, Ohio State, Penn State, Florida State and Washington have some question marks, but are more than capable of throwing a wrecking ball into Bama's plans.

— COMPILED BY CLARK GRELL, JOURNAL STAR



Illustration by
CLARK GRELL, JOURNAL STAR

DRAWING UP A WINNER

BEWARE OF ERASE MARKS

6		WASHINGTON	Quarterback Jake Browning, tailback Myles Gaskin and wideout Dante Pettis form one of the nation's top offensive trios.	Must replace both starting corners and a star safety; not a good sign with pass-happy teams such as UCLA, Wazzu and Cal on the schedule.
7		OKLAHOMA STATE	QB Max Rudolph (4,091 passing yards and 28 TDs last year), WR James Washington and RB Justice Hill give the Pokes plenty of firepower.	OSU's defense, which gave up 446 yards per game last year, has holes to plug, though Mike Gundy is optimistic the group will be just fine.
8		CLEMSON	Defense can and will carry the Tigers thanks to a dominant front seven that includes Christian Wilkins, Dexter Lawrence and Clelin Ferrell.	Of course, we must ask who will replace Deshaun Watson at QB? Could be Kelly Bryant. Could be Zerrick Cooper. Unknowns surround both.
9		AUBURN	Auburn ranked 112th nationally in passing last year, and that's about to drastically change with ex-Baylor QB Jarrett Stidham a Tiger now.	War Eagle will need to fill a couple of key holes on the defensive line. Will those players be ready for the physical play of Alabama and LSU?
10		OKLAHOMA	Bob Stoops may be gone, but QB Baker Mayfield, a former walk-on, is still on campus. He threw for nearly 4,000 yards and 40 TDs in 2016.	Lincoln Riley's first season as head coach takes some difficult turns (at Ohio State, at Baylor, at Kansas State and at Oklahoma State).
11		WISCONSIN	LB Jack Cichy (torn ACL) is out, but the Badgers still have one of the top defenses in the nation. LB T.J. Edwards is primed for a bigger year.	Outside of Jazz Peavy, the Badger wideouts will not scare anyone, and QB Alex Hornibrook is good, but not great.
12		GEORGIA	Seventeen starters are back, including RB Nick Chubb and sophomore QB Jacob Eason, a former five-star recruit loaded with potential.	The Dawgs must replace three starters up front on defense, and the schedule is dotted with games at Notre Dame, Tennessee and Auburn.
13		LSU	Leonard Fournette is rumbling in the NFL now, so in steps Derrius Guice, who saw plenty of snaps last year (1,387 yards and 15 TDs).	Surprise! Questions remain when it comes to quarterback play. Danny Etling remains the guy, and LSU has a new OC (Matt Canada).
14		LOUISVILLE	It's always a good sign when a Heisman winner returns. Lamar Jackson (5,114 total yards, 51 total TDs) is the straw that stirs the drink.	Which Cardinals team will we see? The one that rolled to a 9-1 start last year? Or the one that limped to the finish (three straight losses)?
15		MICHIGAN	The secondary needs revamping, but Michigan's front seven (led by Rashan Gary and Mike McCray) should help alleviate some pressure.	Michigan must replace its top three pass catchers from last year, and the offensive line must show it can bring it in big games.
16		FLORIDA	Jim McElwain has something going in Gainesville. His two years at the helm have result in two SEC East Division championships.	The Gators have a QB situation to figure out. Does the job belong to Notre Dame transfer Malik Zaire, who arrived on campus this summer?
17		STANFORD	Defensive tackle Harrison Phillips, a Millard West graduate, is a highly respected leader. He had 46 tackles and 6½ sacks last year.	QB Keller Chryst tore his ACL in the Sun Bowl last year, but it appears he'll be ready to go. How does Stanford replace Christian McCaffrey?
18		MIAMI	Canes return 10 of 11 starters on "D," a unit that already was among the best in the country in 2016. LB Shaquille Quarterman is a rising star.	Defense may have to carry team to start. Miami must replace four starters on the O-line, and there are some big shoes to fill at QB.
19		SOUTH FLORIDA	The Charlie Strong era begins at USF, and he has a heck of a star in QB Quinton Flowers (2,812 passing yards, 1,530 rushing yards last year).	There's too much pressure on the offense to carry the team. The "D" gave up nearly 482 yards a game last year.
20		WEST VIRGINIA	Florida transfer Will Grier takes over at quarterback, and he'll fit nicely in Dana Holgorsen's offense, which also features RB Justin Crawford.	The schedule is far from a cakewalk: at K-State and at Oklahoma, and the season begins with a neutral-site contest vs. Virginia Tech.
21		KANSAS STATE	O-line is the biggest strength. Add QB Jesse Ertz and a dangerous return man (Byron Pringle), and it's your typical tough K-State squad.	Ertz will need to be a better thrower assuming the Wildcats find themselves in offensive shootouts against some of those Big 12 offenses.
22		VIRGINIA TECH	Hokies finished 18th nationally in total defense, and Tremaine Edmunds-Andrew Motuapuaka make up one of the nations' top LB duos.	The offense will be getting a makeover after the departures of several key players, including QB Jerod Evans and WR Isaiah Ford.
23		WASHINGTON STATE	QBs Sam Darnold (USC), Josh Rosen (UCLA) and Jake Browning (Washington) are the buzz, but Luke Falk will rack up bigger numbers.	The Cougars must learn to clean up their mistakes. Only three teams nationally were penalized more than Washington State last year.
24		TENNESSEE	The Vols have multiple question marks, but RB is not one of them. John Kelly will be the go-to back after averaging more than 6 yards per carry last year.	Tennessee must find a replacement at QB, but more importantly, Rocky Top needs to tighten up a defense that lost its best player.
25		TEXAS	Horns made the splashiest hire of the offseason, turning the keys over to Tom Herman, who will lean on QB Shane Buechele.	Bevo needs to find a go-to tailback and the defense is not going to frighten anyone. That "D" will be put to the test at USC on Sept. 16.

THE SCENE

NATIONAL FLOOR PLAN

— COMPILED BY CLINT ROBUS, JOURNAL STAR

3 STORYLINES TO WATCH

SEC LOSING ITS GRIP?

The Southeastern Conference can still lay claim to eight of the past 11 national champions, but the veneer may finally be starting to crack after its more than a decade-long run of dominance. Alabama opened as the preseason No. 1 in the coaches' poll, but four Big Ten teams are in the top 10. A non-SEC school has won three of the past four national titles, including two Atlantic Coast Conference champions. Defending national champ Clemson, along with Florida State and Louisville, will make the ACC a formidable league again, and the Big Ten will have no shortage of contenders with perennial mainstays Ohio State, Michigan and Penn State (see next).

BIG TEN BATTLE ROYALE

Ohio State? Penn State? Michigan? Any of those three could conceivably end up in Indianapolis representing the East Division. Then there's the completely-up-for-grabs West. Wisconsin? Iowa? Northwestern? Nebraska? No matter who emerges victorious in the Big Ten title game, the conference has raised its national profile enough recently to virtually guarantee the Big Ten champ a spot in the national semifinals.



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

LAMAR JACKSON 2.0

Can the Louisville quarterback (above) come back as a more improved and more dangerous version of himself? Jackson took the country by storm last year with 3,453 passing yards, 1,571 rushing yards and 51 total TDs. Back for his junior season, can he better those totals and lead the Cardinals to a rebound after a lackluster finish to last season (three straight losses to finish, including a 29-9 loss to LSU in the Citrus Bowl)?

15 GAMES WE HOPE LIVE UP TO THE HYPE

52: Florida State vs. Alabama (Atlanta)

52: Florida vs. Michigan (Arlington, Texas)

59: Oklahoma at Ohio State

59: Auburn at Clemson

59: Stanford at USC

516: Clemson at Louisville

07: Boise State at Wyoming

014: Auburn at LSU

028: Penn State at Ohio State

028: Florida vs. Georgia (Jacksonville)

N4: Oklahoma at Oklahoma State

N4: LSU at Alabama

N10: Washington at Stanford

N11: Florida State at Clemson

N25: Alabama at Auburn



8 HOPING TO STRIKE A POSE

The early Heisman Trophy candidates

Lamar Jackson, Louisville QB: Can he become the first back-to-back Heisman winner since Ohio State's Archie Griffin (1974-75)?

Saquon Barkley, Penn State RB: After rushing for nearly 1,500 yards and 18 TDs as a sophomore and leading the entire Big Ten in yards from scrimmage, he's back to lead the Nittany Lion offense.

Josh Rosen, UCLA QB: After missing the last half of last season, Rosen returns with all the tools to be an elite quarterback. Will he finally meet expectations?

Sam Darnold, USC QB: The quiet and unassuming Darnold took over as starter in Week 4 last year and then introduced himself to the world with his gunslinging performance in the Rose Bowl.

Jake Browning, Washington QB: The Huskies junior signal-caller is another elite-level NFL prospect, who threw for 3,430 yards and 43 touchdowns to just nine interceptions last year.

Baker Mayfield, Oklahoma QB: The Sooners senior may look for some on-field redemption following a February arrest for public intoxication (he won't miss any game time). This coming after throwing for 3,965 yards and 40 touchdowns (eight interceptions) last year.

Mason Rudolph, Oklahoma State QB: Another possible under-the-radar candidate, but if the Cowboys keep sling around the field like last year, Rudolph should eclipse his totals of 4,091 passing yards and 28 touchdowns.

Bo Scarbrough, Alabama, RB: He'll likely be the workhorse for the Crimson Tide, especially after rushing for 364 yards and six touchdowns over the final three games of last season.

3 TEAMS RECEIVING TOO MUCH BUILDUP

LSU

Going back to the 2011 recruiting class, LSU's average class national ranking is No. 6, according to the 247 Sports composite rankings. But over the past five seasons the Tigers have averaged just nine wins (which around here is enough to get you fired). And so begins the full Ed Orgeron experience. While his previous head coaching stint with Ole Miss wasn't exactly smooth (10-25 in three seasons), he is a players' coach and the Tigers finished the year strong. But can he get the talent to consistently produce W's?

MICHIGAN

The Wolverines lost eight defensive starters that were All-Big Ten last year, yet they start the year at No. 9 in the coaches' preseason poll. Such is the power of the Harbaugh, apparently. Michigan did receive a boost when Florida announced it was suspending seven players for the season-opening game between the two on Sept. 2 at Jerry World in Arlington, Texas. But two of Michigan's biggest Big Ten games are on the road this year (Penn State and Wisconsin).



TEXAS

The Tom Herman era of hugs and kisses begins. To be fair, the Longhorns have the opportunity to justify their preseason No. 23 ranking in the coaches' poll. But recent history says they shouldn't be there in the first place. Since losing to Alabama in the 2009 national championship, Texas has averaged 6.6 wins per season, hasn't won a bowl game since the 2012 Alamo Bowl and hasn't been bowling since Charlie Strong's first season in Austin (2014).

3 TEAMS NOT RECEIVING ENOUGH BUILDUP

OKLAHOMA STATE

The Cowboys' two offensive stars, quarterback Mason Rudolph and wide receiver James Washington, could probably be playing on Sundays this year already. And after turning the aerial attack loose last season, Rudolph and Company are back for another go. That game on Nov. 4 vs. Oklahoma in Stillwater will probably be for the Big 12 title. And Mike Gundy's mullet.

N.C. STATE

The Wolfpack doesn't have an easy go of it looking up at Florida State, Louisville and Clemson in the ACC Atlantic Division, but the defensive line is one of the most formidable in the country. N.C. State returns all four starters up front from a defense that compiled totals of 89 tackles for loss, 37 sacks, 15 forced fumbles (12 recovered).

STANFORD

Quietly, David Shaw and the Cardinal keep marching along and keep winning football games. Since Shaw took over in 2011, Stanford is 64-17 (.790 winning percentage) and 3-2 in bowl games, including a 2-1 record in the Rose Bowl. With most of preseason hype focusing on Southern Cal (No. 4), Washington (No. 7) and UCLA because of their NFL prospect quarterbacks, it would be unwise to overlook No. 14 Stanford.



8 OTHERS MADE FOR SUNDAY

They'll be playing in the NFL

Josh Allen, Wyoming QB: Just a junior, Allen hasn't officially declared for the 2018 draft. But there was buzz following this year's draft that Allen could be the No. 1 overall pick in 2018.

Derwin James, Florida State S: Think Jabril Peppers, just at 6-foot-3 and 211 pounds. James missed most of 2016 with a knee injury, but his athleticism and ability have NFL scouts itching.

Mike Weber, Ohio State RB: Just a sophomore, Weber showed flashes of a future big-play back ability with 1,096 yards and nine touchdowns.

James Washington, Oklahoma State WR: He's the Cowboys' big-play wide receiver, and with running mate Jale McCleskey (who edged Washington 73-71 for the team lead in receptions) also back, he's a lead dog for one of the nation's top tandems.

Mike McGlinchey, Notre Dame OT: At 6-8, 315, McGlinchey is a mountain of a right tackle who will be one of the most sought-after tackles next spring.

Minkah Fitzpatrick, Alabama CB: Fitzpatrick played at both cornerback and safety, actually all six secondary spots, during an All-American sophomore year.

Arden Key, LSU DE: Another junior, but at 6-6, 230, Key is about ready for the NFL right now. He notched 11 sacks and 12½ tackles for loss last season.

Tyquan Lewis, Ohio State DE: A fifth-year senior, he was the Big Ten defensive lineman of the year and returns his eight sacks and 10½ tackles for loss to one of the deepest D-lines in the country.

DRAWING IT UP

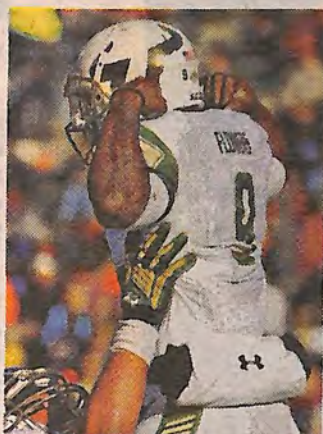
Houston was a dark horse to crack the College Football Playoff last year, but coach Tom Herman left for Texas. So the attention turns to South Florida, which has one of the top quarterbacks in the nation in Quinton Flowers and a proven coach in Charlie Strong. Temple has won the past two East division titles, but will face stiff competition this year. This conference might not yield a playoff team, but who's to say?

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Ed Oliver, DT, Houston: He had 22½ tackles for loss and six sacks last season and can get after the quarterback in the interior of the line.

Quinton Flowers (right), QB, South Florida: The dual-threat senior threw for more than 2,800 yards and ran for 1,500 a season ago.

D'Angelo Brewer, RB, Tulsa: The 5-foot-9 Brewer ran for 1,425 yards last year, including a 242-yard performance against Fresno State.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

A31: Tulsa at Oklahoma St.

S30: Houston at Temple

N16: Tulsa at South Florida

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

East: 1. South Florida, 2. Central Florida, 3. Temple, 4. UConn, 5. Cincinnati, 6. East Carolina.

West: 1. Memphis, 2. Navy, 3. Houston, 4. Tulsa, 5. SMU, 6. Tulane.

CINCINNATI

Aug. 31 Austin Peay, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Michigan, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 at Miami (Ohio), 7 p.m.
Sept. 23 at Navy, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 Marshall, TBA
Oct. 7 UCF, TBA
Oct. 21 SMU, TBA
Oct. 28 at South Florida, TBA
Nov. 4 at Tulane, TBA
Nov. 10 Temple, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18 at East Carolina, TBA
Nov. 25 Connecticut, TBA

CONNECTICUT

Aug. 31 Holy Cross, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 South Florida, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 at Virginia, 11 a.m.
Sept. 30 at SMU, TBA
Oct. 6 Memphis, 6 p.m.
Oct. 14 at Temple, TBA
Oct. 21 Tulsa, TBA
Oct. 28 Missouri, TBA
Nov. 4 East Carolina, TBA
Nov. 11 at UCF, TBA
Nov. 18 Boston College, 6 p.m.
Nov. 25 at Cincinnati, TBA

EAST CAROLINA

Sept. 2 James Madison, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9 at West Virginia, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 Virginia Tech, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 South Florida, TBA
Oct. 7 Temple, TBA
Oct. 14 at UCF, TBA
Oct. 21 BYU, TBA
Oct. 28 at Houston, TBA
Nov. 4 at Connecticut, TBA
Nov. 11 Tulane, TBA
Nov. 18 Cincinnati, TBA
Nov. 25 at Memphis, TBA

HOUSTON

Sept. 2 at UTSA, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Arizona, 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 Rice, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23 Texas Tech, TBA
Sept. 30 at Temple, TBA
Oct. 7 at SMU, TBA
Oct. 14 at Tulsa, TBA
Oct. 19 Memphis, 7 p.m.
Oct. 28 East Carolina, TBA
Nov. 4 at South Florida, TBA
Nov. 18 at Tulane, TBA
Nov. 24 Navy, TBA

MEMPHIS

Aug. 31 La.-Monroe, 8 p.m.
Sept. 9 at UCF, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16 UCLA, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23 Southern Illinois, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30 at Georgia State, TBA
Oct. 6 at Connecticut, 6 p.m.
Oct. 14 Navy, TBA
Oct. 19 at Houston, 7 p.m.
Oct. 27 Tulane, 7 p.m.
Nov. 3 at Tulsa, 7 p.m.
Nov. 18 SMU, TBA
Nov. 25 East Carolina, TBA

NAVY

Sept. 1 at FAU, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 Tulane, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 Cincinnati, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 at Tulsa, TBA
Oct. 7 Air Force, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 14 at Memphis, TBA
Oct. 21 UCF, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 2 at Temple, 7 p.m.
Nov. 11 SMU, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 24 at Houston, TBA
Dec. 9 Army, 2 p.m.

SMU

Sept. 2 Stephen F. Austin, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 North Texas, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 at TCU, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 Arkansas St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 30 Connecticut, TBA
Oct. 7 Houston, TBA
Oct. 21 at Cincinnati, TBA
Oct. 27 Tulsa, 8 p.m.
Nov. 4 UCF, TBA
Nov. 11 at Navy, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 at Memphis, TBA
Nov. 25 Tulane, TBA

SOUTH FLORIDA

Aug. 26 at San Jose St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Connecticut, 11 a.m.
Sept. 15 Illinois, 6 p.m.
Sept. 21 Temple, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30 at East Carolina, TBA
Oct. 14 UMass, TBA
Oct. 21 at Tulane, TBA
Oct. 28 Cincinnati, TBA
Nov. 4 Houston, TBA
Nov. 16 Tulsa, 7 p.m.
Nov. 24 at UCF, TBA

TEMPLE

Sept. 2 at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 Villanova, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 15 Massachusetts, 7 p.m.
Sept. 21 at South Florida, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30 Houston, TBA
Oct. 7 at East Carolina, TBA
Oct. 14 Connecticut, TBA
Oct. 21 at Army, 11 a.m.
Nov. 2 Navy, 7 p.m.
Nov. 10 at Cincinnati, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18 UCF, TBA
Nov. 25 at Tulsa, TBA

TULANE

Sept. 2 Grambling, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Navy, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Oklahoma, 5 p.m.
Sept. 23 Army, TBA
Oct. 7 Tulsa, TBA
Oct. 14 at FIU, 6 p.m.
Oct. 21 South Florida, TBA
Oct. 27 at Memphis, 7 p.m.
Nov. 4 Cincinnati, TBA
Nov. 11 at East Carolina, TBA
Nov. 18 Houston, TBA
Nov. 25 at SMU, TBA

TULSA

Aug. 31 at Oklahoma St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 UL Lafayette, 3 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Toledo, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 New Mexico, TBA
Sept. 30 Navy, TBA
Oct. 7 at Tulane, TBA
Oct. 14 Houston, TBA
Oct. 21 at Connecticut, TBA
Oct. 28 at SMU, 8 p.m.
Nov. 3 Memphis, 7 p.m.
Nov. 16 at South Florida, 7 p.m.
Nov. 25 Temple, TBA

UCF

Sept. 2 at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 Villanova, 11:30 a.m.
Sept. 15 UMass, 6 p.m.
Sept. 21 at South Florida, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30 Houston, TBA
Oct. 7 at East Carolina, TBA
Oct. 14 Connecticut, TBA
Oct. 21 at Army, 11 a.m.
Nov. 2 Navy, 7 p.m.
Nov. 10 at Cincinnati, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18 UCF, TBA
Nov. 25 at Tulsa, TBA

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ATL. COAST

DRAWING IT UP

The ACC was one of the most-watched conferences in 2016, finishing with Louisville's Lamar Jackson capturing the Heisman Trophy and Clemson winning the national championship in dramatic fashion against Alabama. With Deshaun Watson in the NFL after leading the Tigers to the title, and Louisville's questions on the offensive line, Florida State has emerged as the favorite in the Atlantic Division. The Seminoles will prove whether they are ready with an early test against No. 1 Alabama in Week 1.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Kelly Bryant, QB, Clemson: Bryant is the front-runner for the Tigers in replacing Deshaun Watson.

Lamar Jackson (right), QB, Louisville: He's back to defend his Heisman. If he can do it, Jackson will enshrine himself into college football history forever.

Deondre Francois, QB, Florida State: He threw for 3,350 yards and 20 touchdowns last season, and is expected to take on a bigger role as a sophomore.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

- S2:** Florida St. vs. Alabama
- S16:** Clemson at Louisville
- S16:** Miami at Florida St.

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

Atlantic: 1. Florida State, 2. Clemson, 3. Louisville, 4. N.C. State, 5. Wake Forest, 6. Syracuse, 7. Boston College.

Coastal: 1. Miami, 2. Virginia Tech, 3. Pittsburgh, 4. Georgia Tech, 5. North Carolina, 6. Duke, 7. Virginia.

BOSTON COLLEGE

Sept. 1	at N. Illinois, 8:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Wake Forest, noon
Sept. 16	Notre Dame, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23	at Clemson, TBA
Sept. 30	C. Michigan, TBA
Oct. 7	Virginia Tech, TBA
Oct. 14	at Louisville, TBA
Oct. 21	at Virginia, TBA
Oct. 27	Florida St., 7 p.m.
Nov. 11	N.C. State, TBA
Nov. 18	vs. UConn*, 6 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Syracuse, TBA

CLEMSON

Sept. 2	Kent St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 9	Auburn, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Louisville, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Boston College, TBA
Sept. 30	at Virginia Tech, TBA
Oct. 7	Wake Forest, TBA
Oct. 13	at Syracuse, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	Georgia Tech, TBA
Nov. 4	at N.C. State, TBA
Nov. 11	Florida St., TBA
Nov. 18	The Citadel, TBA
Nov. 25	at South Carolina, TBA

DUKE

Sept. 2	N.C. Central, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9	Northwestern, 11
Sept. 16	Baylor, 11:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at North Carolina, TBA
Sept. 29	Miami, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	at Virginia, TBA
Oct. 14	Florida St., TBA
Oct. 21	Pittsburgh, TBA
Oct. 28	at Virginia Tech, TBA
Nov. 11	at Army, Noon
Nov. 18	Georgia Tech, TBA
Nov. 25	at Wake Forest, TBA

FLORIDA STATE

Sept. 2	vs. Alabama*, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	La.-Monroe, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	Miami, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	N.C. State, TBA
Sept. 30	at Wake Forest, TBA

Oct. 14	at Duke, TBA
Oct. 21	Louisville, TBA
Oct. 27	at Boston College, 7 p.m.
Nov. 4	Syracuse, TBA
Nov. 11	at Clemson, TBA
Nov. 18	Delaware St., TBA
Nov. 25	Florida, TBA

GEORGIA TECH

Sept. 4	vs. Tennessee*, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Jacksonville St., 11:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at UCF, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Pittsburgh, TBA
Sept. 30	North Carolina, TBA
Oct. 12	at Miami, 7 p.m.
Oct. 21	Wake Forest, TBA
Oct. 28	at Clemson, TBA
Nov. 4	at Virginia, TBA
Nov. 11	Virginia Tech, TBA
Nov. 18	at Duke, TBA
Nov. 25	Georgia, TBA

LOUISVILLE

Sept. 2	vs. Purdue*, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at North Carolina, 11
Sept. 16	Clemson, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Kent St., TBA
Sept. 30	Murray St., TBA
Oct. 5	at N.C. State, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14	Boston College, TBA
Oct. 21	at Florida St., TBA
Oct. 28	at Wake Forest, TBA
Nov. 11	Virginia, TBA
Nov. 18	Syracuse, TBA
Nov. 25	at Kentucky, TBA

MIAMI

Sept. 2	Bethune-Cookman, 11:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Arkansas St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Florida St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	Toledo, TBA
Sept. 29	at Duke, 6 p.m.
Oct. 12	Georgia Tech, 7 p.m.
Oct. 21	Syracuse, TBA
Oct. 28	at North Carolina, TBA
Nov. 4	Virginia Tech, TBA
Nov. 11	Notre Dame, TBA
Nov. 18	Virginia, TBA
Nov. 24	at Pittsburgh, TBA

N.C. STATE

Sept. 2	vs. South Carolina*, 2 p.m.
Sept. 9	Marshall, 5 p.m.
Sept. 16	Furman, 11:20 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Florida St., TBA
Sept. 30	Syracuse, TBA
Oct. 5	Louisville, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14	at Pittsburgh, TBA
Oct. 28	at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	Clemson, TBA
Nov. 11	at Boston College, TBA
Nov. 18	at Wake Forest, TBA
Nov. 25	North Carolina, TBA

NORTH CAROLINA

Sept. 2	California, 11:20 p.m.
Sept. 9	Louisville, Noon
Sept. 16	at Old Dominion, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Duke, TBA
Sept. 30	at Georgia Tech, TBA
Oct. 7	Notre Dame, TBA
Oct. 14	Virginia, TBA
Oct. 21	at Virginia Tech, TBA
Oct. 28	Miami, TBA
Nov. 9	at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Nov. 18	W. Carolina, TBA
Nov. 25	at N.C. State, TBA

PITTSBURGH

Sept. 2	Youngstown St., noon
Sept. 9	at Penn St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Oklahoma St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 23	at Georgia Tech, TBA
Sept. 30	Rice, TBA
Oct. 7	at Syracuse, TBA
Oct. 14	N.C. State, TBA
Oct. 21	at Duke, TBA
Oct. 28	Virginia, TBA
Nov. 9	North Carolina, 7 p.m.
Nov. 18	at Virginia Tech, TBA
Nov. 24	Miami, TBA

SYRACUSE

Sept. 1	Central Conn. St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	Middle Tenn. St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	C. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at LSU, TBA
Sept. 30	at N.C. State, TBA

Oct. 7	Pittsburgh, TBA
Oct. 13	Clemson, 6 p.m.
Oct. 21	at Miami, TBA
Nov. 4	at Florida St., TBA
Nov. 11	Wake Forest, TBA
Nov. 18	at Louisville, TBA
Nov. 25	Boston College, TBA

VIRGINIA

Sept. 2	William & Mary, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Indiana, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	UConn, 11 a.m.
Sept. 22	at Boise St., 7 p.m.
Oct. 7	Duke, TBA
Oct. 14	at North Carolina, TBA
Oct. 21	Boston College, TBA
Oct. 28	at Pittsburgh, TBA
Nov. 4	Georgia Tech, TBA
Nov. 11	at Miami, TBA
Nov. 18	at Miami, TBA
Nov. 24	Virginia Tech, TBA

VIRGINIA TECH

Sept. 3	vs. West Virginia*, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Delaware, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at East Carolina, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Old Dominion, TBA
Sept. 30	Clemson, TBA
Oct. 7	at Boston College, TBA
Oct. 21	North Carolina, TBA
Oct. 28	Duke, TBA
Nov. 4	at Miami, TBA
Nov. 11	at Georgia Tech, TBA
Nov. 18	Pittsburgh, TBA
Nov. 24	at Virginia, TBA

WAKE FOREST

Aug. 31	Presbyterian, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Boston College, noon
Sept. 16	Utah St., 2 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Appalachian St., TBA
Sept. 30	Florida St., TBA
Oct. 7	at Clemson, TBA
Oct. 21	at Georgia Tech, TBA
Oct. 28	Louisville, TBA
Nov. 4	at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	at Syracuse, TBA
Nov. 18	N.C. State, TBA
Nov. 25	Duke, TBA

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BIG TEN

DRAWING IT UP

If things go according to plan, the Big Ten will have a team or two in the College Football Playoff. The only question is, who will it be? Ohio State has longtime starting QB JT Barrett coming back, while Penn State made huge strides last year, which ended with the Nittany Lions hoisting the Big Ten trophy. Michigan and Wisconsin are always in the mix with strong defenses. Or will it be a new team, like Nebraska or Northwestern, taking their turn to make a run at the conference title?

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Saquon Barkley (right), RB, Penn State: Had nearly 2,000 yards from scrimmage and scored 22 TDs last season.

JT Barrett, QB, Ohio State: A seasoned veteran with three years of starting experience, he should be one of the best signal-callers in the country.

Josey Jewell, LB, Iowa: Jewell totaled 124 tackles for the Hawkeyes last year and is the benchmark LB in the conference.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

530: Northwestern at Wisconsin
028: Penn St. at Ohio St.
N25: Ohio St. at Michigan

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

East: 1. Ohio State, 2. Penn State, 3. Michigan, 4. Michigan State, 5. Indiana, 6. Maryland, 7. Rutgers.

West: 1. Wisconsin, 2. Nebraska, 3. Northwestern, 4. Iowa, 5. Minnesota, 6. Illinois, 7. Purdue.

ILLINOIS

Sept. 2 Ball St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 9 W. Kentucky, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15 at South Florida, 6 p.m.
Sept. 29 Nebraska, 7 p.m.
Oct. 7 at Iowa, 11 a.m.
Oct. 14 Rutgers, TBA
Oct. 21 at Minnesota, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 Wisconsin, 11 a.m.
Nov. 4 at Purdue, TBA
Nov. 11 Indiana, TBA
Nov. 18 at Ohio St., TBA
Nov. 25 Northwestern, TBA

INDIANA

Aug. 31 Ohio St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Virginia, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 FIU, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 Georgia Southern, TBA
Sept. 30 at Penn St., TBA
Oct. 14 Michigan, 11 a.m.
Oct. 21 at Michigan St., 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at Maryland, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 Wisconsin, TBA
Nov. 11 at Illinois, TBA
Nov. 18 Rutgers, TBA
Nov. 25 at Purdue, TBA

IOWA

Sept. 2 Wyoming, 11 a.m.
Sept. 9 at Iowa St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 North Texas, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 Penn St., TBA
Sept. 30 at Michigan St., TBA
Oct. 7 Illinois, 11 a.m.
Oct. 14 at Northwestern, TBA
Oct. 21 Minnesota, TBA
Nov. 4 Ohio St., TBA
Nov. 11 at Wisconsin, TBA
Nov. 18 Purdue, TBA
Nov. 24 at Nebraska, 3 p.m.

MARYLAND

Sept. 2 at Texas, 11 a.m.
Sept. 9 Towson, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23 UCF, TBA
Sept. 30 at Minnesota, TBA
Oct. 7 at Ohio St., TBA

Oct. 14 Northwestern, TBA
Oct. 21 at Wisconsin, 11 a.m.
Oct. 28 Indiana, TBA
Nov. 4 vs. Rutgers*, TBA
Nov. 11 Michigan, TBA
Nov. 18 at Michigan St., TBA
Nov. 25 Penn St., TBA

MICHIGAN

Sept. 2 vs. Florida*, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 Cincinnati, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 Air Force, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23 at Purdue, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 7 Michigan St., TBA
Oct. 14 at Indiana, 11 a.m.
Oct. 21 at Penn St., TBA
Oct. 28 Rutgers, 11 a.m.
Nov. 4 Minnesota, TBA
Nov. 11 at Maryland, TBA
Nov. 18 at Wisconsin, TBA
Nov. 25 Ohio St., 11 a.m.

MICHIGAN STATE

Sept. 2 Bowling Green, 11 a.m.
Sept. 9 W. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 Notre Dame, 7 p.m.
Sept. 30 Iowa, TBA
Oct. 7 at Michigan, TBA
Oct. 14 at Minnesota, TBA
Oct. 21 Indiana, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at Northwestern, TBA
Nov. 4 Penn St., TBA
Nov. 11 at Ohio St., TBA
Nov. 18 Maryland, TBA
Nov. 25 at Rutgers, TBA

MINNESOTA

Aug. 31 Buffalo, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Oregon St., 9 p.m.
Sept. 16 Middle Tenn. St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 Maryland, TBA
Oct. 7 at Purdue, TBA
Oct. 14 Michigan St., TBA
Oct. 21 Illinois, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at Iowa, TBA
Nov. 4 at Michigan, TBA
Nov. 11 Nebraska, TBA
Nov. 18 at Northwestern, TBA
Nov. 25 Wisconsin, TBA

NEBRASKA

Sept. 2 Arkansas St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Oregon, 3:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 N. Illinois, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23 Rutgers, TBA
Sept. 29 at Illinois, 7 p.m.
Oct. 7 Wisconsin, TBA
Oct. 14 Ohio St., TBA
Oct. 28 at Purdue, TBA
Nov. 4 Northwestern, TBA
Nov. 11 at Minnesota, TBA
Nov. 18 at Penn St., TBA
Nov. 24 Iowa, 3 p.m.

NORTHWESTERN

Sept. 2 Nevada, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 Duke, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 Bowling Green, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 at Wisconsin, TBA
Oct. 7 Penn St., 11 a.m.
Oct. 14 at Maryland, TBA
Oct. 21 Iowa, TBA
Oct. 28 Michigan St., TBA
Nov. 4 at Nebraska, TBA
Nov. 11 Purdue, TBA
Nov. 18 Minnesota, TBA
Nov. 25 at Illinois, TBA

OHIO STATE

Aug. 31 at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 Oklahoma, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 Army, 3:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 UNLV, TBA
Sept. 30 at Rutgers, TBA
Oct. 7 Maryland, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 14 at Nebraska, TBA
Oct. 28 Penn St., 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 at Iowa, TBA
Nov. 11 Michigan St., TBA
Nov. 18 Illinois, TBA
Nov. 25 at Michigan, 11 a.m.

PENN STATE

Sept. 2 Akron, 11 a.m.
Sept. 9 at Pittsburgh, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 Georgia St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 at Iowa, TBA
Sept. 30 Indiana, TBA

Oct. 7 at Northwestern, 11 a.m.
Oct. 21 Michigan, TBA
Oct. 28 at Ohio St., 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 at Michigan St., TBA
Nov. 11 Rutgers, 11 a.m.
Nov. 18 Nebraska, TBA
Nov. 25 at Maryland, TBA

PURDUE

Sept. 2 vs. Louisville*, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 8 Ohio, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Missouri, 3 p.m.
Sept. 23 Michigan, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 7 Minnesota, TBA
Oct. 14 at Wisconsin, TBA
Oct. 21 at Rutgers, 11 a.m.
Oct. 28 Nebraska, TBA
Nov. 4 Illinois, TBA
Nov. 11 at Northwestern, TBA
Nov. 18 at Iowa, TBA
Nov. 25 Indiana, TBA

RUTGERS

Sept. 1 Washington, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 E. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 Morgan St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 Ohio St., TBA
Oct. 14 at Illinois, TBA
Oct. 21 Purdue, 11 a.m.
Oct. 28 at Michigan, 11 a.m.
Nov. 4 vs. Maryland*, TBA
Nov. 11 at Penn St., 11 a.m.
Nov. 18 at Indiana, TBA
Nov. 25 Michigan St., TBA

WISCONSIN

Sept. 1 Utah St., 8 p.m.
Sept. 9 FAU, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16 at BYU, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 30 Northwestern, TBA
Oct. 7 at Nebraska, TBA
Oct. 14 Purdue, TBA
Oct. 21 Maryland, 11 a.m.
Oct. 28 at Illinois, 11 a.m.
Nov. 4 at Indiana, TBA
Nov. 11 Iowa, TBA
Nov. 18 Michigan, TBA
Nov. 25 at Minnesota, TBA

BIG 12

DRAWING IT UP

Oklahoma aims to reload with the hopes of winning a third straight Big 12 championship. Quarterback Baker Mayfield lost some productive teammates, but has the experience and playmaking skills to carry the Sooners far. Tom Herman took over at Texas after finishing with a 22-4 mark at Houston. Expect a three-way battle for supremacy among the Sooners, Longhorns and the Oklahoma State Cowboys, who are looking to get past the rival Sooners for the first time in three seasons. And don't overlook the Wildcats in the Little Apple, either.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma: Tabbed as one of the best quarterbacks, Mayfield has the task of finding new playmakers.

Mason Rudolph, QB, Oklahoma State: Already NFL-ready, Rudolph returns as the Cowboys' trigger man with a heap of offensive threats.

Kyle Hicks (right), RB, TCU: Hicks will get a lot of touches in the Horned Frogs' backfield and is a threat in the passing game, too.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

- 59:** Oklahoma at Ohio St.
014: Texas vs. Oklahoma
021: Oklahoma St. at Texas

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

1. Oklahoma, 2. Texas,
3. Oklahoma State, 4. Kansas State, 5. West Virginia,
6. TCU, 7. Baylor, 8. Iowa State, 9. Texas Tech,
10. Kansas.

BAYLOR

Sept. 2	Liberty, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	UTSA, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Duke, 11:30 a.m.
Sept. 23	at Oklahoma, TBA
Sept. 30	at Kansas St., TBA
Oct. 14	at Oklahoma St., TBA
Oct. 21	West Virginia, TBA
Oct. 28	Texas, TBA
Nov. 4	at Kansas, TBA
Nov. 11	vs. Texas Tech*, TBA
Nov. 18	Iowa St., TBA
Nov. 24	at TCU, 11 a.m.

IOWA STATE

Sept. 2	N. Iowa, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Iowa, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	at Akron, 11 a.m.
Sept. 28	Texas, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	at Oklahoma, TBA
Oct. 14	Kansas, TBA
Oct. 21	at Texas Tech, TBA
Oct. 28	TCU, TBA
Nov. 4	at West Virginia, TBA
Nov. 11	Oklahoma St., TBA
Nov. 18	at Baylor, TBA
Nov. 25	at Kansas St., TBA

KANSAS

Sept. 2	SE Missouri, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	C. Michigan, 3 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Ohio, 1 p.m.
Sept. 23	West Virginia, TBA
Oct. 7	Texas Tech, TBA
Oct. 14	at Iowa St., TBA
Oct. 21	at TCU, TBA
Oct. 28	Kansas St., TBA
Nov. 4	Baylor, TBA
Nov. 11	at Texas, 5 p.m.
Nov. 18	Oklahoma, TBA
Nov. 25	at Oklahoma St., TBA

KANSAS STATE

Sept. 2	C. Arkansas, 6:10 p.m.
Sept. 9	Charlotte, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	at Vanderbilt, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	Baylor, TBA
Oct. 7	at Texas, TBA
Oct. 14	TCU, TBA
Oct. 21	Oklahoma, TBA
Oct. 28	at Kansas, TBA
Nov. 4	at Texas Tech, TBA
Nov. 11	West Virginia, TBA
Nov. 18	at Oklahoma St., TBA
Nov. 25	Iowa St., TBA

OKLAHOMA

Sept. 2	UTEP, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Ohio St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Tulane, 5 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Baylor, TBA
Oct. 7	Iowa St., TBA
Oct. 14	vs. Texas*, TBA
Oct. 21	at Kansas St., TBA
Oct. 28	Texas Tech, TBA
Nov. 4	at Oklahoma St., TBA
Nov. 11	TCU, TBA
Nov. 18	at Kansas, TBA
Nov. 25	West Virginia, TBA

OKLAHOMA STATE

Aug. 31	Tulsa, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 8	at South Alabama, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23	TCU, TBA
Sept. 30	at Texas Tech, TBA
Oct. 14	Baylor, TBA
Oct. 21	at Texas, TBA
Oct. 28	at West Virginia, TBA
Nov. 4	Oklahoma, TBA
Nov. 11	at Iowa St., TBA
Nov. 18	Kansas St., TBA
Nov. 25	Kansas, TBA

TCU

Sept. 2	Jackson St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Arkansas 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	SMU, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Oklahoma St. TBA
Oct. 7	West Virginia, TBA
Oct. 14	at Kansas St., TBA
Oct. 21	Kansas, TBA
Oct. 28	at Iowa St., TBA
Nov. 4	Texas, TBA
Nov. 11	at Oklahoma, TBA
Nov. 18	at Texas Tech, TBA
Nov. 24	Baylor, 11 a.m.

TEXAS

Sept. 2	Maryland, 11 a.m.
Sept. 9	San Jose St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at USC, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 28	at Iowa St., 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	Kansas St., TBA
Oct. 14	vs. Oklahoma*, TBA
Oct. 21	Oklahoma St., TBA
Oct. 28	at Baylor, TBA
Nov. 4	at TCU, TBA
Nov. 11	Kansas, 5 p.m.
Nov. 18	at West Virginia, TBA
Nov. 24	Texas Tech, 7 p.m.

TEXAS TECH

Sept. 2	E. Washington, 3 p.m.
Sept. 16	Arizona St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Houston, TBA
Sept. 30	Oklahoma St., TBA
Oct. 7	at Kansas, TBA
Oct. 14	at West Virginia, TBA
Oct. 21	Iowa St., TBA
Oct. 28	at Oklahoma, TBA
Nov. 4	Kansas St., TBA
Nov. 11	vs. Baylor*, TBA
Nov. 18	TCU, TBA
Nov. 24	at Texas, 7 p.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Sept. 3	vs. Virginia Tech*, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	East Carolina, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	Delaware St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 23	at Kansas TBA
Oct. 7	at TCU TBA
Oct. 14	Texas Tech, TBA
Oct. 21	at Baylor TBA
Oct. 28	Oklahoma St., TBA
Nov. 4	Iowa St. TBA
Nov. 11	at Kansas St., TBA
Nov. 18	Texas TBA
Nov. 25	at Oklahoma TBA

OF NOTE

The Big 12 will have a championship game this year, which will take place Dec. 2 in Arlington, Texas. The Big 12 still has a round-robin regular-season format, so the top two teams in the standings will meet in the final.

For the first time since 1999, Oklahoma will have a coach calling the shots other than Bob Stoops, who stepped down during the offseason.

Iowa State lost nine games in 2016, and five of those came by 10 points or fewer.

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PAC-12

DRAWING IT UP

Christian McCaffrey is in the NFL and Oregon is at least a year or two away from league title talk. That leaves Washington as the favorite in the Pac-12 North Division. The Huskies return junior QB Jake Browning, who guided the highest-scoring offense (41.8 points per game) in the Pac-12 last year. USC poses as the greatest overall threat, behind quarterback Sam Darnold, who led the Trojans to a 9-1 record after taking over as the starter in late September. The biggest question for USC is whether Darnold can stay upright.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Cody O'Connell, LT, Washington State: O'Connell, standing at 6-foot-9, 370 pounds, was a unanimous All-American selection last year.

Jake Browning (right), QB, Washington: Coming off shoulder surgery, the junior should have no problem making a case for the Heisman Trophy.

Josh Rosen, QB, UCLA: The junior threw for nearly 2,000 yards last year before his season was cut short by injury.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

N10: Washington at Stanford
N18: UCLA at USC
N25: Washington St. at Washington

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

North: 1. Washington, 2. Stanford, 3. Oregon, 4. Washington State, 5. Oregon State, 6. California.

South: 1. USC, 2. UCLA, 3. Colorado, 4. Utah, 5. Arizona State, 6. Arizona.

ARIZONA

Sept. 2 N. Arizona, 10 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Houston, 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 15 at UTEP, 9:15 p.m.
 Sept. 22 Utah, 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 7 at Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 14 UCLA, TBA
 Oct. 21 at California, TBA
 Oct. 28 Washington St., TBA
 Nov. 4 at USC, TBA
 Nov. 11 Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 18 at Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 25 at Arizona St., TBA

ARIZONA STATE

Aug. 31 New Mexico St., 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 9 San Diego St., 10 p.m.
 Sept. 16 at Texas Tech, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 23 Oregon, TBA
 Sept. 30 at Stanford, TBA
 Oct. 14 Washington, TBA
 Oct. 21 at Utah, TBA
 Oct. 28 USC, TBA
 Nov. 4 Colorado, TBA
 Nov. 11 at UCLA, TBA
 Nov. 18 at Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 25 Arizona, TBA

CALIFORNIA

Sept. 2 at North Carolina, 11:20 a.m.
 Sept. 9 Weber St., 4 p.m.
 Sept. 16 Mississippi, 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 USC, TBA
 Sept. 30 at Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 7 at Washington, TBA
 Oct. 13 Washington St., 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 21 Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 28 at Colorado, TBA
 Nov. 4 Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 18 at Stanford, TBA
 Nov. 24 at UCLA, 9:30 p.m.

COLORADO

Sept. 1 vs. Colorado St., 7 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Texas St., 1 p.m.
 Sept. 16 N. Colorado, 1 p.m.
 Sept. 23 Washington, TBA
 Sept. 30 at UCLA, TBA
 Oct. 7 Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 14 at Oregon St., TBA
 Oct. 21 at Washington St., TBA
 Oct. 28 California, TBA
 Nov. 4 at Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 11 USC, TBA
 Nov. 25 at Utah, TBA

OREGON

Sept. 2 S. Utah, 7:15 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Nebraska, 3:30 p.m.
 Sept. 16 at Wyoming, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 23 at Arizona St., TBA
 Sept. 30 California, TBA
 Oct. 7 Washington St., TBA
 Oct. 14 at Stanford, TBA
 Oct. 21 at UCLA, TBA
 Oct. 28 Utah, TBA
 Nov. 4 at Washington, TBA
 Nov. 18 Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 25 Oregon St., TBA

OREGON STATE

Aug. 26 at Colorado St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 2 Portland St., 1 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Minnesota, 9 p.m.
 Sept. 16 at Washington St., 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 30 Washington, TBA
 Oct. 7 at USC, TBA
 Oct. 14 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 26 Stanford, 8 p.m.
 Nov. 4 at California, TBA
 Nov. 11 at Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 18 Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 25 at Oregon, TBA

STANFORD

Aug. 26 vs. Rice*, 9 p.m.
 Sept. 9 at USC, 7:30 p.m.
 Sept. 16 at San Diego St., 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 UCLA, TBA
 Sept. 30 Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 7 at Utah, TBA
 Oct. 14 Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 26 at Oregon St., 8 p.m.
 Nov. 4 at Washington St., TBA
 Nov. 10 Washington, 9:30 p.m.
 Nov. 18 California, TBA
 Nov. 25 Notre Dame, TBA

UCLA

Sept. 3 Texas A&M, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Hawaii, 4 p.m.
 Sept. 16 at Memphis, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 23 at Stanford, TBA
 Sept. 30 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 14 at Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 21 Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 28 at Washington, TBA
 Nov. 3 at Utah, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 11 Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 18 at USC, TBA
 Nov. 24 California, 9:30 p.m.

USC

Sept. 2 W. Michigan, 4:15 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Stanford, 7:30 p.m.
 Sept. 16 Texas, 7:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 at California, TBA
 Sept. 29 at Washington St., 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 7 Oregon St., TBA
 Oct. 14 Utah, TBA
 Oct. 21 at Notre Dame, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 28 at Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 4 Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 11 at Colorado, TBA
 Nov. 18 UCLA, TBA

UTAH

Aug. 31 North Dakota, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 9 at BYU, 9:15 p.m.
 Sept. 16 San Jose St., 9 p.m.
 Sept. 22 at Arizona, 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 7 Stanford, TBA
 Oct. 14 at USC, TBA
 Oct. 21 Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 28 at Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 3 UCLA, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 11 Washington St., TBA
 Nov. 18 at Washington, TBA
 Nov. 25 Colorado, TBA

WASHINGTON

Sept. 1 at Rutgers, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Montana, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 16 Fresno St., 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 at Colorado, TBA
 Sept. 30 at Oregon St., TBA
 Oct. 7 California, TBA
 Oct. 14 Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 28 UCLA, TBA
 Nov. 4 Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 10 at Stanford, 9:30 p.m.
 Nov. 18 Utah, TBA
 Nov. 25 Washington St., TBA

WASHINGTON STATE

Sept. 2 Montana St., 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Boise St., 9:30 p.m.
 Sept. 16 Oregon St., 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 Nevada, TBA
 Sept. 29 USC, 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 7 at Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 13 at California, 9:30 p.m.
 Oct. 21 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 28 at Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 4 Stanford, TBA
 Nov. 11 at Utah, TBA
 Nov. 25 Washington, TBA

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DRAWING IT UP

As always, the SEC's drama will revolve around Alabama. The Crimson Tide have won the past three conference championships and have appeared in the past two College Football Playoff finals, but is this the year Florida or Tennessee rises up to challenge them? Will coach Kirby Smart finally push Georgia into the elite company at the top of the conference? And will LSU's offense finally catch up with its defense and provide a threat to Alabama? Only time will tell.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Derrius Guice (right), RB, LSU: The junior ran for 1,387 yards last year despite living in star Leonard Fournette's shadow.

Jalen Hurts, QB, Alabama: Hurts started as a true freshman last year and led the Tide to the national championship game with 23 TDs to nine interceptions.

Skai Moore, LB, South Carolina: He missed last year with a neck injury but led the Gamecocks in tackles each season from 2013 to 2015.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

O28: Georgia vs. Florida
N4: LSU at Alabama
N25: Alabama at Auburn

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

East: 1. Georgia, 2. Florida, 3. Tennessee, 4. South Carolina, 5. Kentucky, 6. Missouri, 7. Vanderbilt.

West: 1. Alabama, 2. LSU, 3. Auburn, 4. Arkansas, 5. Texas A&M, 6. Ole Miss, 7. Mississippi State.

ALABAMA	
Sept. 2	vs. Florida St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Fresno St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Colorado St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Vanderbilt, TBA
Sept. 30	Mississippi, TBA
Oct. 7	at Texas A&M, TBA
Oct. 14	Arkansas, TBA
Oct. 21	Tennessee, TBA
Nov. 4	LSU, TBA
Nov. 11	at Mississippi St., TBA
Nov. 18	Mercer, TBA
Nov. 25	at Auburn, TBA

ARKANSAS	
Aug. 31	vs. Florida A&M*, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	TCU, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	vs. Texas A&M*, TBA
Sept. 30	New Mexico St., TBA
Oct. 7	at South Carolina, TBA
Oct. 14	at Alabama, TBA
Oct. 21	Auburn, TBA
Oct. 28	at Mississippi, TBA
Nov. 4	Coastal Carolina, TBA
Nov. 11	at LSU, TBA
Nov. 18	Mississippi St., TBA
Nov. 24	Missouri, 1:30 p.m.

AUBURN	
Sept. 2	Georgia Southern, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Clemson, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	Mercer, 3 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Missouri, TBA
Sept. 30	Mississippi St., TBA
Oct. 7	Mississippi, TBA
Oct. 14	at LSU, TBA
Oct. 21	at Arkansas, TBA
Nov. 4	at Texas A&M, TBA
Nov. 11	Georgia, TBA
Nov. 18	La.-Monroe, TBA
Nov. 25	Alabama, TBA

FLORIDA	
Sept. 2	vs. Michigan*, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	N. Colorado, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Tennessee, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Kentucky, TBA
Sept. 30	Vanderbilt, TBA

Oct. 7	LSU, TBA
Oct. 14	Texas A&M, TBA
Oct. 28	vs. Georgia*, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Missouri, TBA
Nov. 11	at South Carolina, TBA
Nov. 18	UAB, TBA
Nov. 25	Florida St., TBA

GEORGIA	
Sept. 2	Appalachian St., 5:15 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Notre Dame, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Samford, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Mississippi St., TBA
Sept. 30	at Tennessee, TBA
Oct. 7	at Vanderbilt, TBA
Oct. 14	Missouri, TBA
Oct. 28	vs. Florida*, TBA
Nov. 4	South Carolina, TBA
Nov. 11	at Auburn, TBA
Nov. 18	Kentucky, TBA
Nov. 25	at Georgia Tech, TBA

KENTUCKY	
Sept. 2	at Southern Miss, 3 p.m.
Sept. 9	E. Kentucky, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	at South Carolina, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Florida, TBA
Sept. 30	E. Michigan, TBA
Oct. 7	Missouri, TBA
Oct. 21	at Mississippi St., TBA
Oct. 28	Tennessee, TBA
Nov. 4	Mississippi, TBA
Nov. 11	at Vanderbilt, TBA
Nov. 18	at Georgia, TBA
Nov. 25	Louisville, TBA

LSU	
Sept. 2	vs. BYU*, 8:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Chattanooga, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Mississippi St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	Syracuse, TBA
Sept. 30	Troy, TBA
Oct. 7	at Florida, TBA
Oct. 14	Auburn, TBA
Oct. 21	at Mississippi, TBA
Nov. 4	at Alabama, TBA
Nov. 11	Arkansas, TBA
Nov. 18	at Tennessee, TBA
Nov. 25	Texas A&M, TBA

MISSISSIPPI	
Sept. 2	South Alabama, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	UT-Martin, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	at California, 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	at Alabama, TBA
Oct. 7	at Auburn, TBA
Oct. 14	Vanderbilt, TBA
Oct. 21	LSU, TBA
Oct. 28	Arkansas, TBA
Nov. 4	at Kentucky, TBA
Nov. 11	Louisiana-Lafayette, TBA
Nov. 18	Texas A&M, TBA
Nov. 23	at Mississippi St., 6:30 p.m.

MISSISSIPPI STATE	
Sept. 2	Charleston Southern, 3 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Louisiana Tech, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	LSU, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Georgia, TBA
Sept. 30	at Auburn, TBA
Oct. 7	BYU, TBA
Oct. 21	Kentucky, TBA
Oct. 28	at Texas A&M, TBA
Nov. 4	UMass, TBA
Nov. 11	Alabama, TBA
Nov. 18	at Arkansas, TBA
Nov. 23	Mississippi, 6:30 p.m.

MISSOURI	
Sept. 2	Missouri St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 9	South Carolina, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	Purdue, 4 p.m.
Sept. 23	Auburn, TBA
Oct. 7	at Kentucky, TBA
Oct. 14	at Georgia, TBA
Oct. 21	Idaho, TBA
Oct. 28	at UConn, TBA
Nov. 4	Florida, TBA
Nov. 11	Tennessee, TBA
Nov. 18	at Vanderbilt, TBA
Nov. 24	at Arkansas, 1:30 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA	
Sept. 2	vs. NC State*, 2 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Missouri, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	Kentucky, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Louisiana Tech, TBA
Sept. 30	at Texas A&M, TBA

Oct. 7	Arkansas, TBA
Oct. 14	at Tennessee, TBA
Oct. 28	Vanderbilt, TBA
Nov. 4	at Georgia, TBA
Nov. 11	Florida, TBA
Nov. 18	Wofford, TBA
Nov. 25	Clemson, TBA

TENNESSEE	
Sept. 4	at vs. Georgia Tech*, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Indiana St., 3 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Florida, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	UMass, TBA
Sept. 30	Georgia, TBA
Oct. 14	South Carolina, TBA
Oct. 21	at Alabama, TBA
Oct. 28	at Kentucky, TBA
Nov. 4	Southern Miss, TBA
Nov. 11	at Missouri, TBA
Nov. 18	LSU, TBA
Nov. 25	Vanderbilt, TBA

TEXAS A&M	
Sept. 3	at UCLA, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Nicholls, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	La.-Lafayette, 11 a.m.
Sept. 23	vs. Arkansas*, TBA
Sept. 30	South Carolina, TBA
Oct. 7	Alabama, TBA
Oct. 14	at Florida, TBA
Oct. 28	Mississippi St., TBA
Nov. 4	Auburn, TBA
Nov. 11	New Mexico, TBA
Nov. 18	at Mississippi, TBA
Nov. 25	at LSU, TBA

VANDERBILT	
Sept. 2	at Middle Tenn. St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	Alabama A&M, 3 p.m.
Sept. 16	Kansas St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Alabama, TBA
Sept. 30	at Florida, TBA
Oct. 7	Georgia, TBA
Oct. 14	at Mississippi, TBA
Oct. 28	at South Carolina, TBA
Nov. 4	W. Kentucky, TBA
Nov. 11	Kentucky, TBA
Nov. 18	Missouri, TBA
Nov. 25	at Tennessee, TBA

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CONE USA

DRAWING IT UP

The forecast is the same as it was in 2016 when Louisiana Tech and Western Kentucky were the front-runners. Louisiana Tech has won the West Division two of the past three years but will have to overcome challenges on the offensive side. Western Kentucky boasts a powerful offense but may need time to adjust under first-year coach Mike Sanford. The Hilltoppers defeated Louisiana Tech 58-44 last season behind the arm of Mike White.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

J'Mar Smith (right), QB, Louisiana Tech: He's the fourth quarterback for the Bulldogs to start in the past four seasons, adding a dual threat into his arsenal.

Chris Johnson, DT, Western Kentucky: Had 43 tackles and 12½ for loss to lead the Hilltopper defense.

Mike White, QB, Western Kentucky: White piloted the Hilltoppers to an FBS-best 45.5 points per game last season.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

S2: Houston vs. UTSA
S16: La. Tech at W. Kentucky
O21: S. Miss at La. Tech

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

East: 1. Western Kentucky, 2. Middle Tennessee, 3. Old Dominion, 4. Florida Atlantic, 5. Marshall, 6. Florida International, 7. Charlotte.

West: 1. Louisiana Tech, 2. Southern Miss, 3. Texas-San Antonio, 4. North Texas, 5. Rice, 6. UTEP, 7. UAB.

CHARLOTTE

Sept. 1	at E. Michigan, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Kansas St., 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	North Carolina A&T, 5 p.m.
Sept. 23	Georgia State, 5 p.m.
Sept. 30	at FIU, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	Marshall, 5 p.m.
Oct. 14	at W. Kentucky, 3:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	UAB, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Old Dominion, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	Middle Tenn. St., 1 p.m.
Nov. 18	at Southern Miss, 2 p.m.
Nov. 25	FAU, 1 p.m.

FLA. ATLANTIC

Sept. 1	Navy, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Wisconsin, 11 a.m.
Sept. 16	Bethune-Cookman, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Buffalo, TBA
Sept. 30	Middle Tenn. St., 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	at Old Dominion, 5 p.m.
Oct. 21	North Texas, TBA
Oct. 28	at W. Kentucky, 3:30 p.m.
Nov. 3	Marshall 6 p.m.
Nov. 11	at Louisiana Tech, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	FIU, 6 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Charlotte, 1 p.m.

FLA. INTERNATIONAL

Aug. 31	at UCF, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9	Alcorn St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Indiana, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Rice, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	Charlotte, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	at Middle Tenn. St., 2 p.m.
Oct. 14	Tulane, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	at Marshall, 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	UTSA, 6 p.m.
Nov. 11	Old Dominion, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18	at FAU, 6 p.m.
Nov. 24	W. Kentucky, 6 p.m.

LOUISIANA TECH

Sept. 2	Northwestern St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	Mississippi St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at W. Kentucky, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	at South Carolina, TBA
Sept. 30	South Alabama, 6 p.m.

Oct. 7	at UAB, TBA
Oct. 21	Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	at Rice, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	North Texas, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	FAU, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	at UTEP, TBA
Nov. 25	UTSA, TBA

MARSHALL

Sept. 2	Miami (Ohio), 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at N.C. State, 5 p.m.
Sept. 16	Kent St., 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	at Cincinnati, TBA
Oct. 7	at Charlotte, 5 p.m.
Oct. 14	Old Dominion, 1:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	at Middle Tenn. St., 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	FIU, 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 3	at FAU, 5 p.m.
Nov. 11	W. Kentucky, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	at UTSA, 6 p.m.
Nov. 25	Southern Miss, 1:30 p.m.

MIDDLE TENN. STATE

Sept. 2	Vanderbilt, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Syracuse, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Minnesota, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Bowling Green, 6 p.m.
Sept. 30	at FAU, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	FIU, 2 p.m.
Oct. 14	at UAB, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	Marshall, 6 p.m.
Nov. 4	UTEP, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	at Charlotte, 1 p.m.
Nov. 17	at W. Kentucky, 7 p.m.
Nov. 25	Old Dominion, 2 p.m.

NORTH TEXAS

Sept. 2	Lamar, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	at SMU, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Iowa, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	UAB, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	at Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
Oct. 14	UTSA, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	at FAU, TBA
Oct. 28	Old Dominion, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Louisiana Tech, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	UTEP, 4 p.m.
Nov. 18	Army, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Rice, noon

OLD DOMINION

Sept. 2	Albany, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9	at UMass, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	North Carolina, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Virginia Tech, TBA
Oct. 7	FAU, 5 p.m.
Oct. 14	at Rice, 1:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	W. Kentucky, 5 p.m.
Oct. 28	at North Texas, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	Charlotte, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	at FIU, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18	Rice, 1 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Middle Tenn. St., 2 p.m.

RICE

Aug. 26	Stanford, 9 p.m.
Sept. 9	at UTEP, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Houston, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	FIU, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	at Pittsburgh, TBA
Oct. 7	Army, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	at UTSA, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	Louisiana Tech, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at UAB, TBA
Nov. 11	Southern Miss, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	at Old Dominion, 1 p.m.
Nov. 25	North Texas, noon

SOUTHERN MISS

Sept. 2	Kentucky, 3 p.m.
Sept. 9	Southern, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	at La.-Monroe, 6 p.m.
Sept. 30	North Texas, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	at UTSA, 6 p.m.
Oct. 14	UTEP, 6 p.m.
Oct. 21	at Louisiana Tech, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	UAB, 6 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Tennessee, TBA
Nov. 11	at Rice, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	Charlotte, 2 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Marshall, 1:30 p.m.

TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO

Sept. 2	Houston, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Baylor, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	Southern, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Texas State
Oct. 7	Southern Miss, 6 p.m.

Oct. 14	at North Texas, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	Rice, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	at UTEP, 7 p.m.
Nov. 4	at FIU, 6 p.m.
Nov. 11	UAB, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18	Marshall, 6 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Louisiana Tech, TBA

UAB

Sept. 2	Alabama A&M, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Ball St., 2 p.m.
Sept. 16	Coastal Carolina, noon
Sept. 23	at North Texas, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	Louisiana Tech, TBA
Oct. 14	Middle Tenn. St., 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	at Charlotte, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 28	at Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
Nov. 4	Rice, TBA
Nov. 11	at UTSA, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18	at Florida, TBA
Nov. 25	UTEP, TBA

UTEP

Sept. 2	at Oklahoma, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Rice, 7 p.m.
Sept. 15	Arizona, 9:15 p.m.
Sept. 23	at New Mexico St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 30	at Army, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	W. Kentucky, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14	at Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	UTSA, 7 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Middle Tenn. St., 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 11	at North Texas, 4 p.m.
Nov. 18	Louisiana Tech, TBA
Nov. 25	at UAB, TBA

WESTERN KENTUCKY

Sept. 2	Eastern Kentucky, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	at Illinois, 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	Louisiana Tech, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	Ball St., 6 p.m.
Oct. 7	at UTEP, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14	Charlotte, 3:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	at Old Dominion, 5 p.m.
Oct. 28	FAU, 3:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Vanderbilt, TBA
Nov. 11	at Marshall, 5:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	Middle Tenn. St., 7 p.m.
Nov. 24	at FIU, 6 p.m.

MID-AMERICAN

DRAWING IT UP

Toledo posted a healthy 9-4 record last year and returns star quarterback Logan Woodside. The Rockets will look to win the stingy West Division, which includes an Eastern Michigan team that could be even better this season. Western Michigan went 12-1 and edged into the fringe of the College Football Playoff discussion, but lost a lot of talent. Can the Broncos reload and reclaim the top spot in the conference? Miami (Ohio) returns most of its offense from last year.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Logan Woodside (right), QB, Toledo: Woodside put up a monster year last year, throwing for 4,129 yards and 45 TDs.

Quentin Poling, LB, Ohio: Racked up 109 tackles a year ago.

Gus Ragland, QB, Miami (Ohio): He completed 64.2 percent of his passes and had a 17-1 TD-INT ratio for the Red-Hawks in 2016.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

S2: W. Michigan at USC

N8: Toledo at Ohio

N24: W. Michigan at Toledo

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

East: 1. Miami (Ohio), 2. Ohio, 3. Bowling Green, 4. Akron, 5. Buffalo, 6. Kent State.

West: 1. Toledo, 2. Western Michigan, 3. Northern Illinois, 4. Eastern Michigan, 5. Central Michigan, 6. Ball State.

AKRON		BUFFALO		KENT STATE		OHIO	
Sept. 2	at Penn St., 11 a.m.	Aug. 31	at Minnesota, 6 p.m.	Sept. 2	at Clemson, 11 a.m.	Sept. 2	Hampton, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	Ark.-Pine Bluff, 5:30 p.m.	Sept. 9	at Army, 11 a.m.	Sept. 9	Howard, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 8	at Purdue 7 p.m.
Sept. 16	Iowa St., 11 a.m.	Sept. 16	Colgate, 5 p.m.	Sept. 16	at Marshall, 5:30 p.m.	Sept. 16	Kansas, 1 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Troy, TBA	Sept. 23	FAU, TBA	Sept. 23	at Louisville, TBA	Sept. 23	at E. Michigan, TBA
Sept. 30	at Bowling Green, TBA	Sept. 30	at Kent St., TBA	Sept. 30	at Buffalo, TBA	Sept. 30	at UMass, TBA
Oct. 7	Ball St., 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 7	W. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 7	at N. Illinois, TBA	Oct. 7	C. Michigan, TBA
Oct. 14	at W. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 14	N. Illinois, TBA	Oct. 14	Miami (Ohio), 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 14	at Bowling Green, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	at Toledo, TBA	Oct. 21	at Miami (Ohio), TBA	Oct. 21	Ohio, TBA	Oct. 21	Kent St., TBA
Oct. 28	Buffalo, 10:30 a.m.	Oct. 28	at Akron, 10:30 a.m.	Oct. 31	Bowling Green, 6:30 p.m.	Oct. 31	Miami (Ohio), TBA
Nov. 4	at Miami (Ohio), 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 7	Bowling Green, 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 8	at W. Michigan, TBA	Nov. 8	Toledo, TBA
Nov. 14	Ohio, TBA	Nov. 16	at Ball St., 6 p.m.	Nov. 14	C. Michigan, TBA	Nov. 14	at Akron, TBA
Nov. 21	Kent St., 6 p.m.	Nov. 24	Ohio, TBA	Nov. 21	at Akron, 6 p.m.	Nov. 24	at Buffalo, TBA
BALL ST.		CENTRAL MICHIGAN		MIAMI (OHIO)		TOLEDO	
Sept. 2	at Illinois, 11 a.m.	Aug. 31	Rhode Island, 6 p.m.	Sept. 2	at Marshall, 5:30 p.m.	Aug. 31	Elon, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9	UAB, 2 p.m.	Sept. 9	at Kansas, 3 p.m.	Sept. 9	Austin Peay, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 9	at Nevada, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16	Tennessee Tech 2 p.m.	Sept. 16	at Syracuse, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 16	Cincinnati 7 p.m.	Sept. 16	Tulsa, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	at W. Kentucky, 6 p.m.	Sept. 23	Miami (Ohio), TBA	Sept. 23	at C. Michigan, TBA	Sept. 23	at Miami, TBA
Sept. 30	at W. Michigan, TBA	Sept. 30	at Boston College, TBA	Sept. 30	at Notre Dame, 4 p.m.	Oct. 7	E. Michigan, TBA
Oct. 7	at Akron, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 7	at Ohio, TBA	Oct. 7	Bowling Green, TBA	Oct. 14	at C. Michigan, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	C. Michigan, 2 p.m.	Oct. 14	Toledo, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 14	at Kent St. 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 21	Akron, TBA
Oct. 26	Toledo, 6 p.m.	Oct. 21	at Ball St., 2 p.m.	Oct. 21	Buffalo, TBA	Oct. 26	at Ball St., 6 p.m.
Nov. 2	at E. Michigan, 5 p.m.	Nov. 1	at W. Michigan, 7 p.m.	Oct. 31	at Ohio, 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 2	N. Illinois, 5 p.m.
Nov. 9	at N. Illinois, 6 p.m.	Nov. 8	E. Michigan, TBA	Nov. 7	Akron 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 8	at Ohio, TBA
Nov. 16	Buffalo, 6 p.m.	Nov. 14	at Kent St., TBA	Nov. 15	E. Michigan, 6 p.m.	Nov. 15	at Bowling Green, TBA
Nov. 21	Miami (Ohio), 6 p.m.	Nov. 24	N. Illinois, TBA	Nov. 21	at Ball St., 6 p.m.	Nov. 24	W. Michigan, TBA
BOWLING GREEN		EASTERN MICHIGAN		NORTHERN ILLINOIS		WESTERN MICHIGAN	
Sept. 2	at Michigan St., 11 a.m.	Sept. 1	Charlotte, 5:30 p.m.	Sept. 1	Boston College, 8:30 p.m.	Sept. 2	at USC, 4:15 p.m.
Sept. 9	South Dakota, 5 p.m.	Sept. 9	at Rutgers, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 9	E. Illinois, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 9	at Michigan St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Northwestern, 6:30 p.m.	Sept. 23	Ohio, TBA	Sept. 16	at Nebraska, 11 a.m.	Sept. 16	Idaho, 7 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Middle Tenn. St., 6 p.m.	Sept. 30	at Kentucky, TBA	Sept. 30	at San Diego St., 9:30 p.m.	Sept. 23	Wagner, TBA
Sept. 30	Akron, TBA	Oct. 7	at Toledo, TBA	Oct. 7	Kent St., 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 30	Ball St., TBA
Oct. 7	at Miami (Ohio) TBA	Oct. 14	at Army, Noon	Oct. 14	at Buffalo, TBA	Oct. 7	at Buffalo, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 14	Ohio, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 21	W. Michigan, 1 p.m.	Oct. 21	at Bowling Green, TBA	Oct. 14	Akron, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	N. Illinois, TBA	Oct. 26	at N. Illinois, 6 p.m.	Oct. 26	E. Michigan, 6 p.m.	Oct. 21	at E. Michigan, 1 p.m.
Oct. 31	at Kent St., 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 2	Ball St., 5 p.m.	Nov. 2	at Toledo, 5 p.m.	Nov. 1	C. Michigan, 7 p.m.
Nov. 7	at Buffalo, 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 8	at C. Michigan, 6:30 p.m.	Nov. 9	Ball St., 6 p.m.	Nov. 8	Kent St., TBA
Nov. 15	Toledo, 6 p.m.	Nov. 15	at Miami (Ohio), 6 p.m.	Nov. 15	W. Michigan, 6 p.m.	Nov. 15	at N. Illinois, 6 p.m.
Nov. 21	at E. Michigan, 6 p.m.	Nov. 21	Bowling Green, 6 p.m.	Nov. 24	at C. Michigan, TBA	Nov. 24	at Toledo, TBA

INDEPENDENT

DRAWING IT UP

Tradition-rich Notre Dame struggled mightily last season, finishing 4-8 despite having tremendous talent. The Irish have another loaded schedule that spans across conferences, including dates with Georgia, Stanford, and Navy. BYU posted a solid season but will have to replace QB Taysom Hill. Watch out for Army, which went 8-5 and could challenge Navy as the top team from the armed forces.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Equanimeous St. Brown, WR, Notre Dame: Aside from having arguably the coolest name in college football, the wideout had 961 yards receiving for the Irish last year.

Tanner Mangum, QB, BYU: Husker fans will remember his devastating Hail Mary at Memorial Stadium a couple of years ago, but the QB is still just a junior. He'll likely take the starting job for the Cougars.

Andrew Ford, QB, Massachusetts: Ford had 2,665 yards through the air last year.

ARMY		MASSACHUSETTS	
Sept. 1	Fordham, 5 p.m.	Aug. 26	at Hawaii, 5 p.m.
Sept. 9	Buffalo, noon	Sept. 9	Old Dominion, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	at Ohio St., 3:30 p.m.	Sept. 15	at Temple, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Tulane, TBA	Sept. 23	at Tennessee, TBA
Sept. 30	UTEP, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 30	Ohio, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	at Rice, 5:30 p.m.	Oct. 14	at South Florida, TBA
Oct. 14	E. Michigan, 11 a.m.	Oct. 21	Georgia Southern, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	Temple, 11 a.m.	Oct. 28	Appalachian St., 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Air Force, 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 4	at Mississippi St., TBA
Nov. 11	Duke, 11 a.m.	Nov. 11	Maine, 3 p.m.
Nov. 18	at North Texas, 5:30 p.m.	Nov. 18	at BYU, 2 p.m.
Dec. 9	at Navy, 2 p.m.		
BYU		NOTRE DAME	
Aug. 26	at Portland St., 2 p.m.	Sept. 2	Temple, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Utah, 9:15 p.m.	Sept. 9	Georgia 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	Wisconsin, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 16	at Boston College, 11 a.m.
Sept. 29	at Utah St., 7 p.m.	Sept. 23	at Michigan St., 7 p.m.
Oct. 6	Boise St., 9:15 p.m.	Sept. 30	Miami (Ohio), 6 p.m.
Oct. 14	at Mississippi St.	Oct. 7	at North Carolina, TBA
Oct. 21	at East Carolina, TBA	Oct. 21	USC, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 28	San Jose St., TBA	Oct. 28	N.C. State, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at Fresno St., TBA	Nov. 4	Wake Forest, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 10	at UNLV, 9:30 p.m.	Nov. 11	at Miami, TBA
Nov. 18	UMass, 2 p.m.	Nov. 18	Navy, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Hawaii, 8 p.m.	Nov. 25	at Stanford, TBA

3 KEY GAMES

S9: Georgia at Notre Dame

O6: Boise St. at BYU

O21: USC at Notre Dame

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

1. BYU, 2. Notre Dame, 3. Army, 4. Massachusetts.

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DRAWING IT UP

Boise State led the Mountain West in total yardage, but was sixth in scoring (33.8 ppg) in 2016. To improve, the Broncos will need to replace three offensive linemen and get consistent production from junior quarterback Brett Rypien. Colorado State looks to compete with Boise State for the Mountain Division crown. On the other side, San Diego State plays two Pac-12 opponents early. The Aztecs go to Arizona State on Sept. 9 before hosting Stanford on Sept. 16, and have an easier conference schedule down the stretch.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Josh Allen (right), QB, Wyoming: He's a future NFL star, the experts say, after throwing for 3,203 yards last year.

DeeSean Johnson, WR, Fresno State: He caught almost half of quarterback Chason Virgil's touchdown passes last season (66 receptions for 773 yards and six scores).

James Butler, RB, Nevada: Butler is the returning rushing leader in the Mountain West after gaining 1,336 yards.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 KEY GAMES

S1: Colorado St. vs. Colorado

S9: Boise St. at Washington St.

N4: Army at Air Force

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

Mountain: 1. Boise State, 2. Colorado State, 3. Wyoming, 4. Air Force, 5. New Mexico, 6. Utah State.

West: 1. San Diego State, 2. Hawaii, 3. UNLV, 4. Nevada, 5. Fresno State, 6. San Jose State.

AIR FORCE	FRESNO STATE	NEW MEXICO	UNLV
Sept. 2 VMI, 1 p.m.	Sept. 2 Incarnate Word, 9 p.m.	Sept. 2 Abilene Christian, 7 p.m.	Sept. 2 Howard, 8 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Michigan, 11 a.m.	Sept. 9 at Alabama, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 9 New Mexico St., 7 p.m.	Sept. 9 at Idaho, 8 p.m.
Sept. 23 San Diego St., 6 p.m.	Sept. 16 at Washington, 8:30 p.m.	Sept. 14 at Boise St., 7 p.m.	Sept. 23 at Ohio St., TBA
Sept. 30 at New Mexico, 6 p.m.	Sept. 30 Nevada, 9 p.m.	Sept. 23 at Tulsa, TBA	Sept. 30 San Jose St., TBA
Oct. 7 at Navy, 2:30 p.m.	Oct. 7 San Jose St., TBA	Sept. 30 Air Force, 6 p.m.	Oct. 7 San Diego St., TBA
Oct. 14 UNLV, TBA	Oct. 14 New Mexico, 9 p.m.	Oct. 14 at Fresno St., 9 p.m.	Oct. 14 at Air Force, TBA
Oct. 20 at Nevada, 8:30 p.m.	Oct. 21 at San Diego St., 9:30 p.m.	Oct. 20 Colorado St., 9:15 p.m.	Oct. 21 Utah St., TBA
Oct. 28 at Colorado St., 2 p.m.	Oct. 28 UNLV, 9 p.m.	Oct. 28 at Wyoming, TBA	Oct. 28 at Fresno St., 9 p.m.
Nov. 4 Army, 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 4 BYU, TBA	Nov. 4 Utah St., 4:30 p.m.	Nov. 4 Hawaii, TBA
Nov. 11 Wyoming, TBA	Nov. 11 at Hawaii, 11 p.m.	Nov. 11 at Texas A&M, TBA	Nov. 10 BYU, 9:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 at Boise St., TBA	Nov. 18 at Wyoming, 1 p.m.	Nov. 17 UNLV, 8:30 p.m.	Nov. 17 at New Mexico, 8:30 p.m.
Nov. 25 Utah St., TBA	Nov. 25 Boise St., 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 24 at San Diego St., 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 25 at Nevada, 3 p.m.
BOISE ST.	HAWAII	SAN DIEGO STATE	UTAH ST.
Sept. 2 Troy, 2:45 p.m.	Aug. 26 at UMass, 5 p.m.	Sept. 2 UC Davis, 7:30 p.m.	Sept. 1 at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Washington St., 9:30 p.m.	Sept. 2 W. Carolina, 11 p.m.	Sept. 9 at Arizona St., 10 p.m.	Sept. 7 Idaho St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 14 New Mexico, 7 p.m.	Sept. 9 at UCLA, 4 p.m.	Sept. 16 Stanford, 9:30 p.m.	Sept. 16 at Wake Forest, 2 p.m.
Sept. 22 Virginia, 7 p.m.	Sept. 23 at Wyoming, TBA	Sept. 23 at Air Force, 7 p.m.	Sept. 23 at San Jose St., TBA
Oct. 6 at BYU, 9:15 p.m.	Sept. 30 Colorado St., 11 p.m.	Sept. 30 N. Illinois, 9:30 p.m.	Sept. 29 BYU, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14 at San Diego St., 9:30 p.m.	Oct. 7 at Nevada, 9:30 p.m.	Oct. 7 at UNLV, TBA	Oct. 7 Colorado St., TBA
Oct. 21 Wyoming, TBA	Oct. 14 San Jose St., 11 p.m.	Oct. 14 Boise St., 9:30 p.m.	Oct. 14 Wyoming, TBA
Oct. 28 at Utah St., 9 p.m.	Oct. 28 San Diego St., TBA	Oct. 21 Fresno St., 9:30 p.m.	Oct. 21 at UNLV, TBA
Nov. 4 Nevada, TBA	Nov. 4 at UNLV, TBA	Oct. 28 at Hawaii, TBA	Oct. 28 Boise St., 9 p.m.
Nov. 11 at Colorado St., 9:30 p.m.	Nov. 11 Fresno St., 11 p.m.	Nov. 4 at San Jose St., TBA	Nov. 4 at New Mexico, 4:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 Air Force, TBA	Nov. 18 at Utah St., TBA	Nov. 18 Nevada, 9:30 p.m.	Nov. 18 Hawaii, TBA
Nov. 25 at Fresno St., 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 25 BYU, 9 p.m.	Nov. 24 New Mexico, 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 25 at Air Force, TBA
COLORADO STATE	NEVADA	SAN JOSE STATE	WYOMING
Aug. 26 Oregon St., 1:30 p.m.	Sept. 2 at Northwestern, 2:30 p.m.	Aug. 26 South Florida, 6:30 p.m.	Sept. 2 at Iowa, 11 a.m.
Sept. 1 vs. Colorado*, 7 p.m.	Sept. 9 Toledo, 6 p.m.	Sept. 2 Cal Poly, TBA	Sept. 9 Gardner-Webb, TBA
Sept. 9 Abilene Christian, TBA	Sept. 16 Idaho St., 6 p.m.	Sept. 9 at Texas, 2:30 p.m.	Sept. 16 Oregon, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Alabama, 6 p.m.	Sept. 23 at Washington St., TBA	Sept. 16 at Utah, 9 p.m.	Sept. 23 Hawaii, TBA
Sept. 30 at Hawaii, 11 p.m.	Sept. 30 at Fresno St., 9 p.m.	Sept. 23 Utah St., TBA	Sept. 30 Texas St., TBA
Oct. 7 at Utah St., TBA	Oct. 7 Hawaii, 9:30 p.m.	Sept. 30 at UNLV, TBA	Oct. 14 at Utah St., TBA
Oct. 14 Nevada, TBA	Oct. 14 at Colorado St., TBA	Oct. 7 at Fresno St., TBA	Oct. 21 at Boise St., TBA
Oct. 20 at New Mexico, 9:15 p.m.	Oct. 20 Air Force, 8:30 p.m.	Oct. 14 at Hawaii, 11 p.m.	Oct. 28 New Mexico, TBA
Oct. 28 Air Force, 2 p.m.	Nov. 4 at Boise St., TBA	Oct. 28 at BYU, TBA	Nov. 4 Colorado St., 6 p.m.
Nov. 4 at Wyoming, 6 p.m.	Nov. 11 San Jose St., TBA	Nov. 4 San Diego St., TBA	Nov. 11 at Air Force, TBA
Nov. 11 Boise St., 9:30 p.m.	Nov. 18 at San Diego St., 9:30 p.m.	Nov. 11 at Nevada, TBA	Nov. 18 Fresno St., 1 p.m.
Nov. 18 San Jose St., 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 25 UNLV, 3 p.m.	Nov. 18 at Colorado St., 2:30 p.m.	Nov. 25 at San Jose St., TBA
		Nov. 25 Wyoming, TBA	

DRAWING IT UP

Appalachian State may have had the superior record at 10-3, but it split the conference title with Arkansas State, which got hot in league play. Both teams will be near the top again this year, with loads of talent returning. Appalachian State has a tough defense that could push the Mountaineers over the top. Troy is a strong team as well, with an experienced QB and many pieces from an offense that scored 33.7 points per game last year. There is not much to say about the rest of the field, so contention will likely be up to the top three teams.

3 PLAYERS BUILT TO LEAVE THEIR MARK

Brandon Silvers, QB, Troy: He passed for 3,180 yards for the Trojans last season.

Jalin Moore (right), RB, Appalachian State: Averaged 5.9 yards per carry last year to go along with 10 touchdowns.

Ja'Von Rolland-Jones, DE, Arkansas State: He's the best defensive player in the conference.



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3 KEY GAMES

S2: Appalachian St. at Georgia

S30: Troy at LSU

D2: Troy at Arkansas St.

STACKING UP

(Projected order of finish)

1. Appalachian State,
2. Troy, 3. Arkansas State,
4. Idaho, 5. South Alabama,
6. Georgia Southern,
7. Louisiana-Lafayette,
8. Louisiana-Monroe,
9. Georgia State, 10. Coastal Carolina, 11. New Mexico State, 12. Texas State.



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APPALACHIAN STATE

Sept. 2 at Georgia, 5:15 p.m.
Sept. 9 Savannah St., 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Texas St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 Wake Forest, TBA
Oct. 7 New Mexico St., 1 p.m.
Oct. 14 at Idaho, 5 p.m.
Oct. 21 Coastal Carolina, TBA
Oct. 28 at UMass, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 at La.-Monroe, 2 p.m.
Nov. 9 Georgia Southern, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 25 at Georgia St., TBA
Dec. 2 La.-Lafayette, TBA

ARKANSAS STATE

Sept. 2 at Nebraska, 7 p.m.
Sept. 9 Miami, 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 16 Ark.-Pine Bluff, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 at SMU, 6 p.m.
Oct. 4 at Georgia Southern, 7 p.m.
Oct. 14 Coastal Carolina, TBA
Oct. 19 La.-Lafayette, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at New Mexico St., 7 p.m.
Nov. 11 at South Alabama, TBA
Nov. 18 Texas St., TBA
Nov. 25 at La.-Monroe 2 p.m.
Dec. 2 Troy, TBA

COASTAL CAROLINA

Sept. 2 UMass 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 at UAB, noon
Sept. 23 W. Illinois, TBA
Sept. 30 at La.-Monroe, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7 Georgia St., TBA
Oct. 14 at Arkansas St., TBA
Oct. 21 at Appalachian St., TBA
Oct. 28 Texas St., TBA
Nov. 4 at Arkansas, TBA
Nov. 11 Troy, TBA
Nov. 18 at Idaho, 4 p.m.
Dec. 2 Georgia Southern, TBA

GEORGIA SOUTHERN

Sept. 2 at Auburn, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 9 New Hampshire, 5 p.m.
Sept. 23 at Indiana, TBA
Oct. 4 Arkansas St., 7 p.m.
Oct. 14 New Mexico St., 5 p.m.
Oct. 21 at UMass, 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at Troy, TBA
Nov. 4 Georgia St., 2 p.m.
Nov. 9 at Appalachian St., 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 South Alabama, 2 p.m.
Nov. 25 at La.-Lafayette, TBA
Dec. 2 at Coastal Carolina, TBA

GEORGIA STATE

Aug. 31 Tennessee St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Penn St., 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 at Charlotte, 5 p.m.
Sept. 30 Memphis, TBA
Oct. 7 at Coastal Carolina, TBA
Oct. 14 at La.-Monroe, 4 p.m.
Oct. 21 Troy, TBA
Oct. 26 South Alabama, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 at Georgia Southern, 2 p.m.
Nov. 11 at Texas St., TBA
Nov. 25 Appalachian St., TBA
Dec. 2 Idaho, TBA

IDAHO

Aug. 31 Sacramento St., 8 p.m.
Sept. 9 UNLV, 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 at W. Michigan, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 at South Alabama, TBA
Oct. 7 La.-Lafayette, 4 p.m.
Oct. 14 Appalachian St., 4 p.m.
Oct. 21 at Missouri, TBA
Oct. 28 La.-Monroe, 4 p.m.
Nov. 2 at Troy, 8:15 p.m.
Nov. 18 Coastal Carolina, 4 p.m.
Nov. 25 at New Mexico St., TBA
Dec. 2 at Georgia St., TBA

LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Sept. 2 SE Louisiana, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Tulsa, 3 p.m.
Sept. 16 at Texas A&M, noon
Sept. 23 La.-Monroe, TBA
Oct. 7 at Idaho, 4 p.m.
Oct. 12 Texas St., 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 19 at Arkansas St., 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 at South Alabama, TBA
Nov. 11 at Ole Miss, TBA
Nov. 18 New Mexico St., TBA
Nov. 25 Georgia Southern, TBA
Dec. 2 at App. St., TBA

LOUISIANA-MONROE

Aug. 31 at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Florida St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 16 Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 at La.-Lafayette, TBA
Sept. 30 Coastal Carolina, 6 p.m.
Oct. 7 at Texas St., TBA
Oct. 14 Georgia St., 4 p.m.
Oct. 21 at South Alabama, TBA
Oct. 28 at Idaho, 4 p.m.
Nov. 4 Appalachian St., 2 p.m.
Nov. 18 at Auburn, TBA
Nov. 25 Arkansas St., 2 p.m.

SOUTH ALABAMA

Sept. 2 at Ole Miss, 6:30 p.m.
Sept. 8 Oklahoma St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 16 Alabama A&M, 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 Idaho, TBA
Sept. 30 at Louisiana Tech, 6 p.m.
Oct. 11 at Troy, 7 p.m.
Oct. 21 La.-Monroe, TBA
Oct. 26 at Georgia St., 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 4 La.-Lafayette, TBA
Nov. 11 Arkansas St., TBA
Nov. 18 at Ga. Southern, 2 p.m.
Dec. 2 at New Mexico St., TBA

TEXAS STATE

Sept. 2 Houston Baptist, 6 p.m.
Sept. 9 at Colorado, 1 p.m.
Sept. 16 Appalachian St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 23 UTSA, TBA
Sept. 30 at Wyoming, 3 p.m.
Oct. 7 La.-Monroe, TBA
Oct. 12 at La.-Lafayette, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 28 at Coastal Carolina, TBA
Nov. 4 New Mexico St., TBA
Nov. 11 Georgia St., TBA
Nov. 18 at Arkansas St., TBA
Nov. 4 at Troy, TBA

TROY

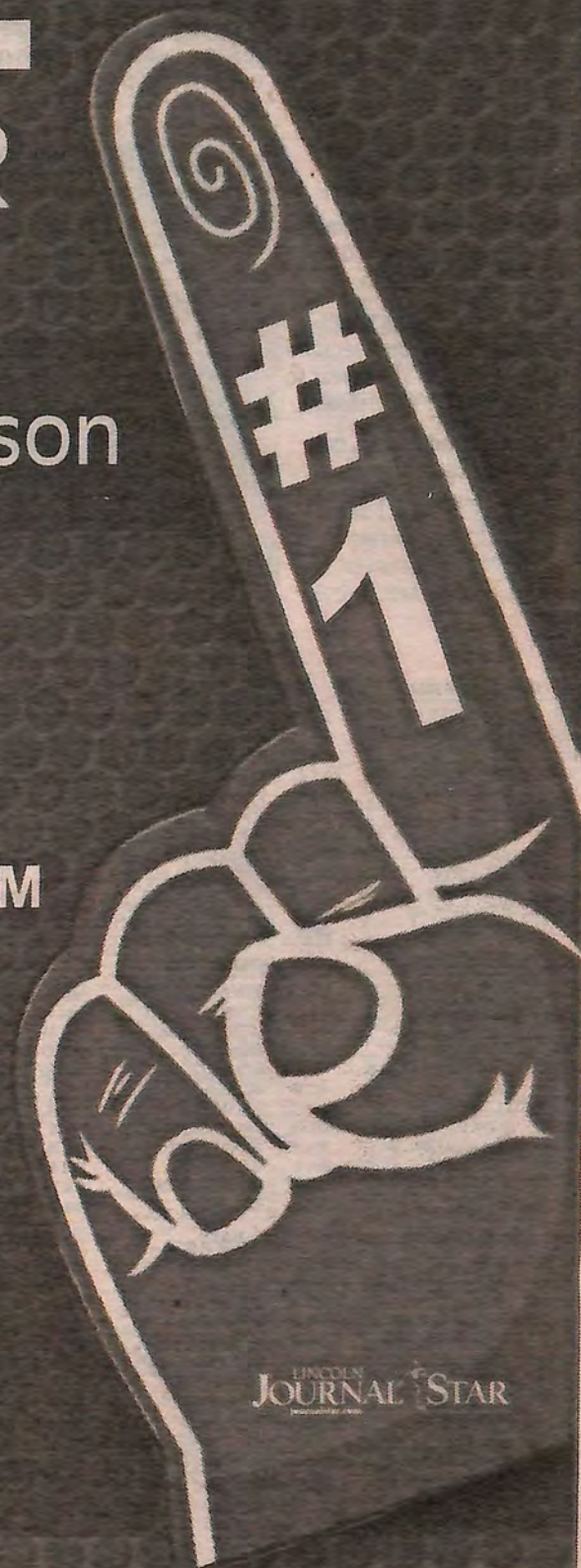
Sept. 2 at Boise St., 2:45 p.m.
Sept. 9 Alabama St., 5 p.m.
Sept. 16 at New Mexico St., 7 p.m.
Sept. 23 Akron, TBA
Sept. 30 at LSU, TBA
Oct. 11 South Alabama, 7 p.m.
Oct. 21 at Georgia St., TBA
Oct. 28 Georgia Southern, TBA
Nov. 2 Idaho, 8:15 p.m.
Nov. 11 at Coastal Carolina, TBA
Nov. 24 Texas St., TBA
Dec. 2 at Arkansas St., TBA

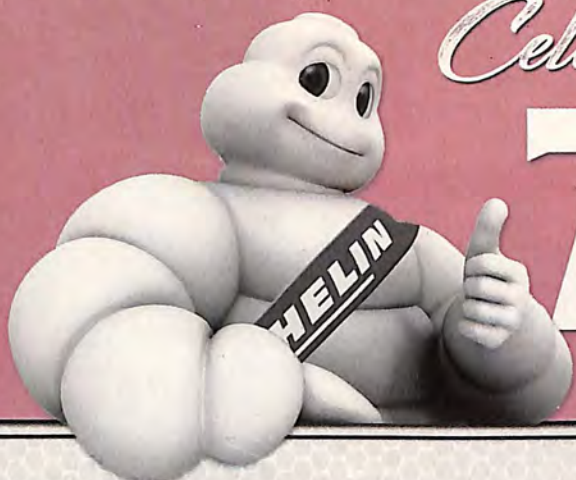
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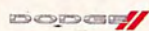
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